RECIPROCITY, REVENGE AND RELIGIOUS IMPERATIVES:
FIGHTING IN THE HIGHLANDS OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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I wish to thank Dr Don Gardner for his encouragement and patience in giving me guidance during the writing of this thesis, particularly as his time has been so valuable. Thanks also to Dr Nick Peterson for motivation during Don's absence, and for the original encouragement from the late Prof. Anthony Forge who thought that it was a good idea to pursue the topic.
Preface

In 1990, the Department of Anthropology at the A.N.U. offered *The Anthropology of New Guinea and Melanesia*, a course that looked interesting in its own right and was virtually guaranteed to be so because it was to be conducted by Prof. Anthony Forge. The focus of the course turned out to be the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, and thus began my interest in the area. A number of lectures and tutorials - as well as the essay topics that they generated - involved theories as to why Highlanders fought. These were interesting questions to contemplate but not so easy to answer because the question of tense was problematic. The literature to which I turned for evidence was written in an ethnographic present of anywhere between the early 1950's and the late 1980's. The early ethnographers wrote of fighting in the past tense and took it for granted that the Highlands had been 'pacified' yet later writers reported fighting in the present tense. When it came to evaluating the data, deciding the appropriate tense to use was far more than a grammatical exercise because only *some* Highland groups had returned to fighting. Moreover, these groups - those who fought and those who did not - could be loosely grouped into two geographic areas. Much of the analysis of contemporary Highland fighting that focussed on problems of modernisation and the like, paid scant attention to fighting in the past and ignored the differences between different Highland groups in the present. Therefore it seemed to me that it was worth looking for themes in Highland life which could account for fighting, past and present, and suggest reasons why some areas of the Highlands are more troubled than others.
HIGHLANDS PAPUA NEW GUINEA

1. Sambia
2. Baruya
3. Fore
4. Kamano
5. Taiora
6. Bena Bena
7. Guhuku-Gama
8. Siane
9. Chauve
10. Chimbu
11. Wahgi (Kuma)
12. Hagen (Melpa)
13. Nebilyer (Ku Waru)
14. Kyaka Enga
15. Mae Enga
16. Mendi
17. Kewa
18. Pangia (Wiru)
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Perceptions of a Decline in 'Law and Order'

'For almost three-quarters of my life, I lived in fear and distress and I wish to live the rest of my life in peace' (Mr Akapi Akalenda, an Engan traditional leader, interviewed in Moses 1978:219).

On 14th March 1993, Papua New Guinea's then Prime Minster, Mr Wingti announced the formation of a National Law, Order and Justice Council. Replacing all existing law and order committees, the new council was to be the sole coordinator of law and order issues. Mr Wingti noted that in the past there had been 'too many committees and too little action on the law and order question' (Post-Courier, 15 March, 1993). His predecessor, Mr Namaliu, instructed a previous Crime Summit, 'To come up with constructive and even radical solutions to the crime problems which are crippling the country ... crime is like a cancer, eating away at the very heart and lifeblood of our society ... a threat to economic stability and progress' (Post-Courier, 12 February, 1991). Numerous state enquiries have been instigated in response to a law and order situation that is perceived to interfere with the development of the country and the quality of life of its people1. Problems have been restated, recommendations remade and sometimes draconian measures proposed2. Yet in both official and informal circles it is believed that the situation is deteriorating. Scholarly journals and government reports, editorial comment and letters to the editor, frequently express concern about the 'break-down' of law and order.

Given the lack of reliable statistics, the extent - or indeed the existence - of a deteriorating law and order situation is not easy to establish (Paney 1973:3, Clifford et al 1984:i, Morauta 1986:7). Nevertheless its presumed effects are proclaimed nationally and internationally. Foreign investors, concerned for their investments and safety of staff, treat Papua New Guinea with caution (Sydney Morning Herald 29 March, 1993) and tourism continues to decline (Post-Courier 5 August, 1992). Local businesses have closed down, public resources and facilities are destroyed and disrupted (Post-Courier 13 January, 1992), personal freedom is restricted and injury and loss of life is reported on an almost daily basis. The adverse effects on economic stability and economic development are critical concerns for the Papua New Guinea Government. Conversely, economic concerns - problems of 'under-development', unemployment and a build up of social disparities - are reported to be root causes of law and order problems (Morgan Report, cited in Dinnen 1986:77, Brunton 1986:31, Dinnen 1991:80, Prime Minister Wingti, reported in Canberra Times, 30 April, 1993). Such a perspective places the analysis of

1 See Appendix 1 for an overview of enquiries and government responses to law and order issues.
2 See Appendix 2 for examples.
issues of law and order in a world-wide context whereby crime is explained in terms of development/under-development, dependency and the problems of modernisation. This remains a common approach to the 'law and order problem' despite warnings of the parochialism of Western criminology and its inappropriate application in Papua New Guinea (Boehringer 1976:211, 1978:35, Gordon & Meggitt 1985:4, Dinnen 1986:81-82) and despite the fact that the historical record portrays a seemingly aggressive and violent past, and in the case of the Highlands, the recent past.

So called 'break-downs' in law and order, whether manifested in urban crime or tribal fighting, are seen as representing a serious challenge to state authority which sees its problems in Western terms and has certain expectations regarding its function and authority, including its monopoly on the legitimate use of force (Koch 1979:199, Clifford et al 1984:91, Gordon & Meggitt 1985:2). Government leaders in the Highlands consider that the state of law and order in their area is particularly volatile and they respond to the issue by calling for special laws and increased police powers that place emphasis on arrest, trial and correction. There is a disparity though between the general expectation that the government should solve law and order problems (with stronger laws, penalties and the like) and the people's lack of faith in the powers of government intervention (Morauta 1986:13). Thus it is argued that Highlanders, finding the government's dispute solving mechanisms unsatisfactory, do not respect the courts and turn instead to their own methods of resolving disputes (Clifford et al 1984:ii, Mapusia 1986:60, Morauta 1986:15). Tribal fighting therefore is explained somewhat paradoxically, not as a law and order problem in itself, but as a response or solution to law and order problems (Morauta 1986:8).

Implicit in these arguments is the idea that the meaning of 'law and order' is unequivocal and based on a convention whereby 'peace' is supposedly unproblematic and fighting and warfare the opposite. A second assumption in the law and order debate is elucidated by the words of the traditional Engan leader, quoted above, in an interview with an Engan student. Having revised his outlook and ceased fighting after becoming a Christian in 1960, it was his perception that fighting in the past was 'only a hobby...like boxing of today', unlike the fierce tribal fighting now (Moses 1978:219). The construction of a

3 See M. Strathern 1991a:120, note 1, re use of 'Western' to draw attention to cultural particularity.
4 Although it has been argued that there are organizational similarities between urban crime and tribal fighting in the Highlands (Goddard 1992:20) and that raskol gangs are now associated with tribal fights (Strathern A. 1992:239), it is customary to recognize tribal fighting as a special category of disorder (Clifford et al, 1984:Chapter 7, Morauta 1986:7-8, Dinnen 1989:16).
5 A Meeting of Highland Premiers, reported Post-Courier 28 February, 1991 and a Highlands Law and Order Seminar, reported Post-Courier 30 March, 1992, are two of many occasions when official concern was expressed. By 1994 Provincial Government itself was in such disarray that ten out of nineteen Provincial Governments had been suspended for maladministration (Times 20 January, 1994). Although now abandoned, proposals were made to abolish all Provincial Governments later in 1994 (ibid. 31 March, 1994).
law and order 'problem' is thereby based on the premise of a 'break-down' of some pre-existing standard in existence in unspecified 'traditional' times or perhaps established during the colonial administration.

Something of the opposing issues involved can be depicted from two related entries in the Post-Courier. In response to a reported increase in rape and sexual assault, the editorial of 23 April, 1985 lamented the 'loss of traditional respect for women' and suggested that 'what is wanted is for the customary understanding and honour for women to return and be accorded to our women today'. A letter in reply to the editor voiced an opposing opinion. According to the memories of the writer's mother, raids, theft, destruction and rape were indeed 'customary' and that nothing has changed (Post-Courier 29 April, 1985). Yet for a period during the colonial administration, things did change.

Early ethnographic accounts of Highland life highlight an atmosphere of suspicion, hostility, aggression and competitiveness. Warfare was chronic, incessant, endemic and a feature of ordinary social living (Read 1954:5,22, Berndt R. 1964:183, Langness 1964:173, Reay 1964:243, Sillitoe 1978:254, Strathern A. 1982a:140). Ongka's account of himself as a New Guinea big-man (Strathern A. 1979a) - a story illustrated with tales of warfare and revenge - attests to the ethnographers' views. Indeed the time of Ongka's birth and the name given to him by his father are defined in terms of who had just been killed and what his father planned to do about it. It is worth remembering however that although early ethnographers arrived shortly after 'first contact', it is possible that the 'traditional' life that they observed or reconstructed from the memories of informants had already changed (cf. Strathern A. 1979b:531, Herdt & Poole 1982:9, Ferguson 1988:iv). Ethnographers of the 1950's and 60's, working in conditions of relative peace and safety, wrote of warfare in the past tense and speculated as to why 'pacification' was relatively easy (Berndt R. 1952:150, Reay 1964:245). That it is now difficult to decide the appropriate tense in discussing warfare accentuates the fact that pacification was short lived or perhaps an illusion. A significant issue in reviewing tribal fighting, past and present, is the nature of pacification and its apparent 'failure'. Like the concept of 'peace', 'pacification' of the Highlands seems to have been taken for granted, and this is of interest and relevance in itself.

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6 These crimes are a significant component of urban and rural crime. The nature of gender relations is discussed later in Chapter 2 and was/is an aspect of tribal warfare.

7 That memories can be unreliable was illustrated by Warry (1987:2). Describing a mortuary feast in 'traditional' times, the informants included beer in the occasion.

8 In Read's introduction to, The High Valley (1965), where he talks of his personal feelings, there is no indication of concern for his own safety.
Warfare - Past, Present or Continuous?

The purpose of this paper is to examine the issue of law and order, specifically tribal fighting, in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea from two perspectives - diachronic and synchronic. Although many official government reports suggest that tribal fighting has been an ongoing concern to both the colonial and national governments (Paney 1973, Clifford et al 1984), its historic particularity is often overlooked in subsequent analysis (Opeba 1978:91, Knauft 1990:250) particularly when tribal fighting today is evaluated in terms of 'under-development', the problems of modernisation and increasing social disparities. Even if the specific characteristics of tribal fighting are acknowledged, the problem is seen as one of legal pluralism, involving different perceptions of disputes and dispute settlement between Highlanders and the state (Dinnen 1989:16). Such a view is based on the assumption, as mentioned above, that the concept of 'peace' is an unproblematic universal that has somehow 'broken-down'. This approach does not analyse the nature of warfare in pre-colonial times except perhaps to imply that Highlanders fought when other methods of dispute settlement failed. With this view of warfare, pacification of the Highlands is seen as the result of an alternative method of dispute management provided by a strong external government, one which subsequently failed when the government was perceived to be 'soft' and ineffectual. Paradoxically, a return to 'customary' law is often called upon to restore law and order to the Highlands.

The assumption that fighting is the result of a failure of methods of dispute settlement under contemporary or 'customary' law locates a great deal of the law and order debate in the realm of social control. Such an approach makes little or nothing of a belief system in the Highlands that considers fighting less of a problem and more of a necessity demanded by the existence of the logic of retribution, whereby reciprocity - including revenge - was (is) a religious imperative (cf. Trompf 1991, 1994). That this is an issue of some interest can be inferred by two relatively recent comments. In his thesis, Standish (1991:58, footnote) noted that secular anthropological literature tends to ignore ancestor worship, sorcery and witchcraft (that is general religious issues) despite its relevance to 'contemporary clan politics and sometimes beyond'. In a similar vein, M. Strathern in interview (Czegledy 1992-93:5) regrets that she did not attend church in Mt Hagen despite the fact that many settlements around Hagen focused on the Lutheran Church. She assumed, perhaps incorrectly, that she knew what was being said in the services while in fact Christianity may have been taking a somewhat different course to what she expected.

This thesis seeks the reasons why Highlanders fought in the past and argues that in essence there is a broad continuity in belief systems on which the colonial administration and the Christian missions made little lasting impression. Ethnographic accounts of tribal warfare are used here as historical
'texts', to obviate the concern of a shifting 'ethnographic present', unavoidable in a forty-year span of ethnographic reports. Although they are written in the context of historic change (Marcus 1986:165), ethnographies capture a temporal moment in reconstructed 'traditional' times viewed through the lens of current anthropological theory (cf. Merlan & Rumsey 1991:Chapter 1). Yet in aggregation these texts define synchronic structural relationships, represent a history of anthropological thought in themselves and bear witness to change - or otherwise - in the Highland world. Using a combination of anthropological texts it is possible to ask what elements or patterns of 'traditional' tribal fighting are relevant to the Highland 'law and order' situation today.

Chapter 2 examines warfare in the past, the nature of the warfare and the warfaring group and those interlocking factors that made warfare inevitable. In this chapter generalizations are made about the Highlands as a whole and broad comparisons made between the east and the west. This is not intended to deny the considerable differences that exist between all Highland groups or to create a false impression of coherence. Rather the intention is to seek broad themes or patterns in Highland warfare in the past.

Chapter 3 examines the nature of pacification. Initially it reviews the literature on the pacification of Melanesia to see what factors contributed to the establishment of a long lasting peace, and compares them with what actually occurred in the Highlands. Ostensibly the Highlands were pacified, but given that fighting resumed, this chapter speculates as to what was different in the process of Highland 'pacification'.

Chapter 4 explores the different experiences of pacification in the east and west of the Highlands. These differences are significant, because pacification was relatively successful in the east and short-lived in the west. This chapter seeks to explain the continuity of factors that also make contemporary warfare inevitable.

The argument is divided into sub-sections, and the secular and sacred teased out. This is to facilitate the examination of the issues, and is not to suggest that Highland life is artificially segmented.

The Use of 'Highlands' as a Category

The Highland area of Papua New Guinea is large, its people diverse and the use of 'Highlands' as a broad category open to criticism (Hayes 1993). Nevertheless, this paper uses 'Highlands' as a general geographical category, partly because early exploration, administration and anthropological overviews

9 See Clifford J. in Writing Culture (1986).
10 This division is to facilitate discussion and does not imply that the groups discussed within these boundaries are identical nor the separation complete. It has been suggested that a social and cultural continuum may exist between the east and the west (Feil 1987, Strathern A. 1991).
did so, and partly because present day administration and analyses continue to differentiate it from other areas in Papua New Guinea. Although generalities are made about the Highlands as a whole, in the final analysis the focus is the western Highlands, not the province of that name, but rather a geographic area that includes the provinces of the Western Highlands, Enga, and Simbu\textsuperscript{11}. This is the area today where tribal fighting is at its worst (Standish 1973:4, Strathern A. 1977:143-144, 1984:23, 1992:232, Gordon & Meggitt 1985:7-8, Brown P. 1986:165, Brown & Schuster 1986:158, Mapusia 1986:60, Feil 1987:64 (note), Hughes J. 1989:94, Knauft 1990:276).

\textsuperscript{11} Cf. M. Strathern, \textit{The Gender of the Gift} (1988:46 and 355, note i) for a similar geographic approach. Occasionally examples are also drawn from adjacent groups in the Southern Highlands which have a similarity to those in the western Highlands.
CHAPTER 2: WARFARE IN THE PAST

Introduction

This chapter discusses the nature of 'traditional' Highland warfare in general. Although the interests of this thesis finally rest on the continued violence in the Western Highlands, ethnographic examples used here refer to both the eastern and western Highlands. Given that the distinction made between the east and the west is to a degree artificial - a device to aid discussion - and that the societies within these areas are unique, it is still possible to argue that there are common social and cultural themes running through all these societies. Ethnographic examples from the eastern and western Highlands are not teased out in this chapter (although they are in the chapters following where it is argued that pacification had a differential effect on the belief systems in these broad areas) partly because the common themes seem more important than the differences, and partly because the earliest ethnographic accounts were from the eastern Highlands - K. Read beginning to publish in 1951 and R. Berndt 1952 with both authors later extrapolating and generalizing to other areas (Read 1954 and Berndt R. 1964).

The opening sections of this chapter briefly locate the rapprochement of white men - prospectors, administrators, missionaries and anthropologists - with the Highlanders from the beginning of the 1930's, and further discusses the the nature of Highland warfare and some of the theories which have attempted to explain it. Explanations of warfare have been generated from many differing perspectives - functional, structural, ecological, political, psychological and the like12 - which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. This thesis takes the view that warfare is best seen viewed as part of a constellation of factors that made up Highland society and culture that in essence was grounded in a belief system which was underpinned by a way of reasoning that emphasised the need for balance and equivalence, that is by retributive logic (cf. Trompf 1991, 1994). Warfare was part of a network of relationships, including gender relations, production and exchange, that centred upon autonomous territorial groups led by big-men13 who achieved their status by the manipulation of a range of personal skills. The configuration of these relationships varied between different tribal groups. The Guhuku-Gama, Bena-Bena and Baruya in the eastern Highlands for

12 Knauft (1990) gives a comprehensive overview of these theories.
13 'Big-man' is the name applied to a Melanesian leader whose status as leader is achieved rather than ascribed. Numbers of writers, particularly those reporting on fringe highland areas, claim that the big-man stereotype is misleading and should be used with more caution. Nevertheless it is a useful term to describe Highland leaders, given the proviso that big-men in different areas may achieve their position through different criteria. To a greater or lesser degree, big- men are entrepreneurial, manipulating the exchange of valuables, particularly pigs and sometimes shells (in Hagen). In this they are different to great-men. Exchange is still important in great-men societies, but great-men can achieve greatness in a number of ways - as warriors, gardeners or shamans for example.
example, exhibited a different elaboration of warfare relationships from the Chimbu, Enga, Kuma and Melpa in the west. This had implications for the way pacification was achieved across the Highlands and ultimately sustained in limited areas only. In this section however more will be made of the common themes that ran through Highland life, in particular a belief system where reciprocity and revenge were religious imperatives.

**First Contact in the Highlands**

Early in the 1930's, in what is now the independent state of Papua New Guinea, Australian gold prospectors\textsuperscript{14} entered the Highlands from the east, hoping to find gold in what they thought was a virtually uninhabited mountain chain. What they found instead was a massive cordillera that extended westwards into vast open landscapes of grasslands, gardens and managed regrowth (Golson 1982:115). Exploration revealed a population bigger than any other on the island of New Guinea. Fragmented into enclaves, they produced gardens of sweet potatoes and herds of domesticated pigs and in some areas engaged in remarkable sequences of ceremonial exchange (Brown P. 1978:i-x, Golson 1982:115, Connolly & Anderson 1987:11-12). Equally remarkable was the ferocity of the fighting in which they engaged (Leahy & Crain 1937, Knauft 1990:265). The men who came out to exclaim at the strangeness of the white men were never without weapons and rarely without battle scars; and they invariably turned back in fear as they approached the edge of their territory and the domain of their enemies (Connolly & Anderson 1987:25). To the Highlanders, death from natural causes was puzzling (Leahy & Crain 1937:221).

Seen initially as relatives returned from the dead or spirit beings from out of the sky, the first white men in the Highlands travelled in relative safety\textsuperscript{15} despite the evidence of violence around them (Leahy & Crain 1937:171, Strathern A. 1977:137, Gordon 1983:208-9, Connolly & Anderson 1987:6,79). By the time the Highlanders realized that these were ordinary men they appreciated the power of their guns and the quality of their trade goods, particularly highly-prized pearl shells (Leahy & Crain 1937:143-144, Connolly & Anderson 1987:101-2,116). The missionaries and administrators who

\textsuperscript{14} Michael Leahy and Dwyer made their first journey in 1930 into the Goroka and Asaro Valleys. Again in 1930 they explored the same valleys, as well as the Bena-Bena Valley. In 1933, after aerial reconnaissance, Leahy and assistant district officer Taylor, entered the Wahgi Valley in the western Highlands. Because of their journals and pictorial records the Leahy brothers explorations are well remembered. Other prospectors explored the Highlands - among these the Schmidts, father and son (the father eventually hung for indiscriminate murder of Highlanders), and also the Fox brothers who explored in 1934.

\textsuperscript{15} It is clear that the scale of violence used by white men was under-reported in colonial accounts (Knauft 1993:187 referring to Jack Hide's journey). Having failed to carry the appropriate shell valuables for exchange, Jack Hides' expedition in the Southern Highlands experienced regular attacks. Consequently his group suffered from starvation and ambush and many Papuans were killed (Sinclair 1971: Chapters 14-18). Likewise Mick Leahy's diaries indicated many more shootings than the official records acknowledged.

The opening up of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea also permitted access by anthropologists. Although the coming of white men had already brought changes to the Highlands - the use of steel axes that allowed men\textsuperscript{16} to invest their time differently (Salisbury 1962), the inflation of pearl shells which changed relationships between men (Strathern A. 1966:364, 1974:243, Feil 1982:301) and pacification itself which protected ethnographers from attack (Schultz 1987:3, cf. Crick 1989:35) - compared to other indigenous peoples who long had been influenced by outsiders, life in the Highlands was relatively unchanged (Knauf 1990:265). Such was the intensity of the indigenous violence reported, it became the focus of anthropologists' work. As Read described it in 1954, 'Physical violence and antagonism is the warp of the cultural pattern' (1954:23) and 'warfare...the dominant orientation of Highland cultures' (1954:5).

The Nature of Warfare and the Warfaring Group

Although warfare has been the focus of anthropological interest, in the context of Highland diversity a succinct definition of 'warfare' is not possible (cf. Sillitoe 1978:252). At the most basic level it involves the concept of a political group. The ethos of aggressiveness, competition and belligerence reported across the Highlands may have provoked internal fighting, but in contrast to 'true' warfare it was subject to disapproval and sanctions. Within the group, fighting involved clubs, sticks and fists and ideally avoided killing (Read 1965:44, Langness 1971:303, Meggitt 1977:22). Fighting that can accurately be described as 'warfare', involving the use of potentially lethal weapons like bows, arrows and spears, was directed outside the political group and regarded as right and proper (Berndt R. 1964:183) whether it was planned formal combat or unrestricted raiding.

Types of warfare varied. In the east of the Highlands warriors, routinely armed with bows and arrows, guarded villages by night and women in gardens by day to protect the group from raiding, looting, sneak attacks and cannibalism (Read 1952a:44, 1954:22, Berndt R. 1952:44, 1962:235, 1964:189, Langness 1971:310). At any point in time warfare could be precipitated by revenge, women, pigs, insults, sorcery allegations or a desire

\textsuperscript{16} Where the word 'men' is used in this paper, it means exactly that.
for resources\textsuperscript{17}, with the aim of killing men, women and children, destroying villages, gardens and livestock and depriving the enemy of means of support (Read 1954:22, Langness 1964:174). This type of warfare was described as 'unrestricted' (Langness 1972, cited and elaborated by Feil 1987:67-68) and displayed an absence of constraint compared to that of 'restricted'.

Restricted warfare, implying the presence of rules and relative restraint, may have characterized societies in the Western Highlands (Feil 1987:67-68), yet unrestrained warfare and indiscriminate raids occurred also in the west and were in fact the most common type of warfare (Knaught 1990:274). The Mae Enga, for example, engaged in different types of fighting with different categories of enemies, the nature of the rugged terrain placing all potential enemies and allies - whose definition varied - in close proximity (Meggitt 1977: Chapter 3). Although they occasionally engaged in deliberately planned and carefully orchestrated great fights (Meggitt 1977:17-21), most encounters involved surprise attacks to rout the enemy and maximize destruction of property and life, including the demoralizing mutilation of fallen enemies (Meggitt 1977:36). Similarly, Kuma (Wahgi)\textsuperscript{18} fought in massed planned engagements after extensive ritual preparations as well as making stealthy night ambushes to catch their enemies unaware (O'Hanlon 1989:83), a pattern typical of the Chimbu as well (Brown P. 1982:526-527). According to the story of a big-man, Ongka (Strathern A. 1979a: Chapter 6), Melpa warfare also varied from conflict in open spaces to ambush, involving destruction, rape and indiscriminate killing. Enemies pushed each other backwards and forwards into each other's territory, modified alliances and took advantage of the enemy's temporary weaknesses\textsuperscript{19}.

Hostilities were not limited to violence of the physical kind but could be initiated by sorcery which could sustain conflict when not physically at war (Reay 1964:242, Strathern A. 1982a:141). Although sickness, old age, childbirth, accidents, physical violence and sorcery were seen as immediate causes of death (Berndt R. 1962:210, Strathern A. 1975:80-81), in many cases death was ultimately considered to be the end-product of sorcery. This was

\textsuperscript{17} In the Eastern Highlands it was reported that land was not included in the resources that were fought for (Berndt R. 1964, Langness 1964:173).

\textsuperscript{18} Traditionally the Wahgi had no common name for themselves although today they say that they are 'Wahgi People' (O'Hanlon 1989:10). Reay's early work called some Wahgi people 'Kuma', and later she makes specific reference to the 'Minj' people. Works of later anthropologists, and writers in general, often tend to describe Highland people by the area they live in rather than by tribal names (see also note 33 for example).

\textsuperscript{19} In Melpa warfare the scale of destruction depended on whether wars were minor or major. In major wars there were no restraints, and although the lives of women and children were usually spared in minor wars, destruction could be considerable (Strathern A. 1975:72,74). In the eastern Highlands warfare had been described as intense, pervasive and permanent, with the objective being total routing of the enemy and destruction of the group (Feil 1987:69). In reality most raids resulted in only a few deaths (Langness 1964:174). Further, Harrison (1993:11) extrapolating from evidence in the Sepik, argued that the destruction of the war-making group meant the loss of the group, not the actual population. People could disperse to live with affines and allies.
particularly true of the eastern Highlands, where sorcery was believed responsible for all deaths (Read 1952b:237, Berndt R. 1962:208, Glasse & Lindenbaum 1971:370-371). Although illness and death in the western Highlands could be attributed to the malevolence of ancestral ghosts (Meggitt 1973:11, Strathern A. 1975:80-81), deaths could also be attributed to sorcery (Strathern 1975:80-81, Meggitt 1981:31). In the absence of physical fighting, sorcery, and sometimes poisoning, were used as weapons of revenge (Strathern M. 1972:71) and these were actions that in turn needed to be avenged.

Warfare, viewed as a normal condition of group life, was expected to be something that was never concluded (Read 1952a:2). Allies and enemies inhabited the same moral universe and warfare was a regular and anticipated activity between known groups who did not necessarily have fixed relationships in enmity (Read 1952a:2, Berndt R. 1952:44, 1964:202, Reay 1959:290, Hallpike 1973:453, Meggitt 1977:43, Brown P. 1986:165, Brown D. 1988:91). Categories of allies and enemies could be pragmatically defined, their status capable of redefinition as a result of expediency or treachery (Read 1954:22, Langness 1971:310, Meggitt 1977:43). Rarely oriented towards total destruction, yet more than a stylized game, warfare was a competitive activity, 'coupled with a system of book-keeping for balancing life and death which was (is) central to the representations of inter-group exchanges' (Lemonnier 1991:8-9). Warfare therefore was not merely action but rather a relationship - 'a condition of and between societies with innumerable correlates in virtually every dimension of culture' (Ferguson 1990:26).

Something of the nature of warfare can be seen in the composition of the warfaring group. Generalizations from different ethnographic accounts are not easy to make because a variety of terms, not always synonymous, are used to describe the social units in Highland groups. Despite the profusion of descriptive terms for Highland social units, it was clear that warfare itself was one of the criteria that defined the nature of Highland social groups (Read 1952a:2, 1954:39, Berndt R. 1971:392). While all Highland groups were notionally patrilineal with virilocal residence, the composition of any group

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20 Wild forest spirits and male and female spirits as well as those of the ancestral ghosts could also cause illness and death for the Melpa (Strathern A. 1975:80-81).
21 The Melpa in particular used lethal substances administered in food (Strathern M. 1972:71).
22 R. Berndt characterized warfare as an 'antagonistic game', albeit dangerous and deadly (1962:414, 1964:183-184). It has been suggested that this opinion reflected the degree of pacification that had occurred before Berndt's fieldwork. McLean (1985:66, citing R. Fortune's unpublished papers), noted that during Fortune's first visit to the same culture area, people frankly avowed that they planned to strike first, destroy villages and kill as many people as possible. When he returned in 1952 he found however that people were more evasive in talking about warfare and downplayed the intensity of killing and cannibalism.
was likely to be modified pragmatically by friendship, affinal ties, exchange relationships, adoption and temporary common interests, including the exigencies of war (Read 1954:11, Berndt R. 1964:188, Reay 1971:183, Brown P. 1971:208, Meggitt 1977:43, Strathern A. 1979b:530, Gordon 1983:206, Podolefsky 1984:76). Descent models operated as ideology rather than as a rigid guide for recruitment (Langness 1971:298,300, Strathern A. 1982b:37) and 'dogmas of descent' were conceptualized only when the corporate nature of a group needed to be expressed (Strathern A. 1982b:38). It was suggested that groups could therefore be defined in territorial terms - people did not necessarily reside together because they were kin, but rather they became kin by sheer fact of residence (Langness 1964:172). In the face of endemic warfare, a commitment to maintaining group strength thus took precedence over descent as a principle of recruitment (Langness 1964:169). Regardless of what principle of descent was evoked to explain the composition of the group or what territorial lines were drawn, warfare was an important factor in determining the parameters of groups in the Highlands (cf. Merlan & Rumsey 1991:3, Harrison 1993:9).

The argument is developed here that warfare between groups was but one transaction in reciprocal exchange. The presence of exchange in general and warfare in particular not only helped to explain the nature of social groups, but together with the leadership of big-men, actually determined the success of these groups. Conversely, the fact that groups were held together by competitive big-men who excelled in exchange, could have made warfare inevitable.

The Leadership of Big-Men

The familiar big-man stereotype may have masked the differences between leaders across the Highlands, between big-men and great-men (Jorgensen 1991:256-257, Strathern M. :1991b:1), between big-men who were much like ordinary men (Lederman 1990:4) and big-men who could achieve eminence through a range of capabilities (Modjeska 1982:87), or indeed between big-men of the same tribe24 (Strathern A. 1982a:140-142). While different leadership skills were obligatory in different areas of the Highlands, there was nevertheless a core of personal attributes, elaborated to a greater or lesser extent, that ambitious men - big or great - needed to exhibit in order to attain and maintain the position of leader.

Big-men had to achieve their positions of power. Perhaps outside influences distorted the leadership style of big-men; some claim that the big-men observed by anthropologists were in fact colonial creations (O'Hanlon 1989:36) while others debate as to whether big-men of the past were more or

24 Ndamba and Ongka, both Melpa big-men, exhibited different styles, different power bases and different expectations of family involvement (Strathern A. 1982a:40-42).
less despotic, or their rights inherited (Salisbury 1964:225, Strathern A. 1966:262-263, Feil 1982:299-300). Nevertheless compared to leaders elsewhere, their status lacked formality and ascription (May 1982:641). Sons of big-men had access to wealth (they could marry more wives, grow better gardens and raise more pigs) and people anticipated that they had qualities of their fathers, yet unless they had the requisite personal skills they could not hope to become big-men (Read 1959:427, Reay 1964:244, Brown P. 1971:218, Langness 1971:309). Men of enterprise and initiative could secure a group of followers (Reay 1964:244) and sometimes have their family trees retrospectively adjusted to include a big-man father (Strathern A. 1966:539).

In the eastern Highlands, warrior big-men, with a propensity for violence and aggression and skills in strategy, weapons and warfare in general, were the leaders of highest renown (Read 1954:6, Langness 1971:309). For example Guhuku-Gama and Bena-Bena big-men and Baruya great-men, were proud, quarrelsome and quick to take offence. In part they cultivated the appearance of being successful warriors with the use of flamboyant gesture and dress as well as a demeanour of aggressive self-assertion. Good warriors were the most admired, and the killing of an enemy defined manhood (Berndt R. 1952:45, Read 1952a:2,14, 1954:6, Langness 1971:309, Godelier 1982:3). Highland men in general were reportedly proud, quarrelsome, excitable and physically aggressive (Read 1954:5-6, Reay 1964:246) and although not everyone displayed these characteristics, this was the ideal (Read 1954:5). Baruya great-men could gain recognition through a variety of other skills - as gardeners, cassowary hunters, shamans or keepers of knowledge, as well as being warriors of renown (Godelier 1982:18-30, Jorgensen 1991:261). Some big-men, including those in the western Highlands, were skilled in the techniques of sorcery as well, or at least able to commission agents to kill by sorcery on their behalf (Reay 1971:193, Strathern A. 1982a:141). The reputations of outstanding Kuma leaders were definitely enhanced by the knowledge that they were sorcerers (Reay 1957: 374).

Big-men in the western Highlands were also expected to take decisive action in warfare. Although some big-men may not have been in the front line of battle - indeed as prized targets it would have been foolhardy for them to have done so - they rallied their fighters and made tactical decisions by being as aggressive or conciliatory as the situation demanded. With the use of eloquent language they also exhorted the assistance of the ancestors (Strathern A. 1966:358, 1972:26, 1975:75-79, Meggitt 1977:19-20, 68-69). True big-men in the east and the west of the Highlands were great and persuasive orators (Read 1954:6, Reay 1964:244, Strathern A. 1966:358, Brown P. 1971:217, Langness 1971:309, O'Hanlon 1989:38) - mediators within their own groups and promoters of their groups' interests, peace makers between enemies and manipulators in exchange (Reay 1964:245, Strathern A. 1966:358, Gordon 1983:206, Schiltz 1987:6). Even Matoto, the despotic and
violent leader of Tairora in the eastern Highlands, was reportedly a peacemaker (Watson 1971:239).

Big-men everywhere, including warrior big-men (Langness 1971:310), had more wives, pigs and gardens than ordinary men for the 'strength' of big-men was correlated with their wealth and their ability to contribute to exchange and other festivals (Read 1959:428). Managing and manipulating wealth, both their own and other people's (Reay 1964:244, Meggitt 1971a:193-194), big-men employed their rhetorical skills to mobilize other men in warfare and in reciprocal exchange, for ultimate status came not from the accumulation of goods but the goodwill and reciprocal relations established through the distribution of wealth (Brown P. 1963:5, Salisbury 1964:231).

All big-men had to strike a balance between two seemingly antithetical values - strength on one hand, as illustrated above, and the maintenance of equivalence on the other (Read 1959:427). Within his own group of followers a big-man needed to seek consensus, maintain approval and meet his obligations while sustaining his position of strength (Read 1959:428, Meggitt 1971a:202, Strathern A. 1982b:39). In relationships between groups, whether engaging in the exchange of gifts or blows, strength was essential to prevent the superiority of any one group, to achieve equivalence and to maintain the balance. Underlying these ideals was the suspicion that the other side may not obey the rules and the fact that at any point in time relations were effectively asymmetrical (Read 1959:428-430).

The absence of an ascribed status for the position of big-man led to Highland societies being described as 'egalitarian'. Individuals and groups, in terms of an egalitarian ethos, constantly defined themselves in relation to each other, participating in on-going reciprocal exchange - of wealth or warfare - in the spirit of inherent competitiveness and aggressive individualism that this entailed (cf. Berndt 1962:416). Indeed it has been argued (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:147) that a climate of suspicion and distrust is characteristic of acephalous societies. The label 'egalitarian' tended to mask the inequalities that existed between men and between men and women. In the political domain, particularly in the relationships between autonomous groups, power relations were ostensibly equivalent (Schiltz 1987:3) but in the domestic sphere power relations were hierarchical. Men in general, and big-men in particular, had control of production, which allowed them access to the most prestigious activity - that of exchange (Josephides 1985:1,98). Big-men in the western Highlands used their managerial skills to promote their own assets to the full, particularly the labour of wives in gardening and pig production and in certain areas the manipulation of the trade in shell valuables, as well harnessing the production of others within their groups (Strathern A. 1979b:532, 1982a:141, Feil 1982:294).
Leaders may have fostered unity at home by opposition abroad (Berndt R. 1962:415, Brown P. 1971:219, Brown D. 1988:89), manipulated warfare to undermine their rivals and destroy their enemies (Sillitoe 1978:254) or enhanced their own reputations under the guise of protecting the interests of the group (Meggitt 1977:68, Sillitoe 1978:254). Also they may have turned the consequences of war to their advantage by creating new networks of partners and dependents by the judicious acceptance of refugees (Lemonnier 1991:9). Yet it is too simple a view to consider that big-men acted entirely out of self interest (Strathern A. 1982b:39) for their followers had certain expectations of their performance which the big-men had to continually validate (Read 1959:428, 431-432, Meggitt 1971a:202, O'Hanlon 1989:38) and the focus of this was the balance they maintained between strength and equivalence.

Exchange

Just as Read described Highland violence and antagonism as the 'warp of the cultural pattern' (1954:23), Macintyre and Young suggested that for Melanesia in general, reciprocal exchange was the 'woof to the warp of the social fabric, the means to its cyclical regeneration in time' (1982:207). Exchange permeated every aspect of social life and was an important, if not dominant, organizational principle of social behaviour and cultural thought (Sillitoe 1979:1, Feil 1982:291, Macintyre & Young 1982:207). In the absence of hierarchical principles of order it was a way in which people communicated and defined themselves. That exchange was important is demonstrated by the high status of those who excelled at it (Sillitoe 1979:1, Gordon 1983:206, Gordon & Meggitt 1985:148). Indeed in Hagen society human awareness was believed to have been developed when a child came to appreciate the interdependence and reciprocity of social relationships (Strathern M. 1988:90). Exchange was part of being human. At first contact Hageners thought that the white man was a pale-skinned cannibal as described in folktales until 'he gave us shell valuables in return for pigs, and we decided he was human' (an old Hagen man quoted by Strathern A. 1975:xii).

Arguing from an evolutionary perspective and comparing the eastern and western Highlands, Feil (1987 Chapter 4) maintained that societies in the east placed greater emphasis on warfare than those of the west. While admitting to the lack of evidence in this matter25 (1987:64), he nevertheless suggested that ceremonial exchange in the western Highlands had replaced warfare in cultural value and social priority and had thus become a peaceful substitute for war.

25 As discussed above, it is difficult to prove that warfare was less destructive in the west because warfare was both restricted and unrestricted. Further, as Patrol Officer Downs reported (cited by Meggitt 1977:145), the warlike tendencies of the Enga increase to the west. Part of Feil's evidence for warfare being less emphasised in the west is the existence of dispersed settlements as distinct from the nucleated fortified villages of the east. Reay (1990:65) argues that this merely calls for different defence strategies.
Leaders and their groups, by creating networks of personal alliances and exchange relationships, could therefore relate competitively without fighting. The resurgence of warfare in the western Highlands Feil thus explained as a breakdown in the traditional ties of exchange (1987:64 note 2). This thesis presents the opposite view - that exchange relationships were pivotal in peace and war - the principle of reciprocity underpinning all forms of exchange, including that of revenge (Strathern M. 1985:124-125).

Prior to the staging of major ceremonial exchanges, of which the Hagen moka and Enga tee were particularly elaborate examples, sequences of preparatory exchanges occurred between individual partners, either privately or more likely in groups, culminating in meetings on ceremonial grounds where recipients became more demanding and donors made more generous declarations of intent, overseen by big-men who exhorted lesser men to greater generosity (Strathern A. 1975:115-116, Meggitt 1977:8-9). Exchange relationships were ideally ongoing partnerships - far more than a gift given and a gift received (Brown D. 1988:91) - for in some (but not all) cases, each return gift was required to comprise an increment (Strathern A. 1982a:139). Thus it has been claimed (Brown D. 1988:91) that in certain cases exchange partners, be they individuals or groups, were enmeshed in escalating sequences of prestations and debts that were never cancelled. This is not to claim that exchange transactions and systems were homogeneous across the Highlands. While the Hagen moka and the Enga tee were highly formalized, enchained and all encompassing, other exchange transactions were socially and spatially more restricted. Yet whether exchange occurred between individuals or groups, in vast chains or locally circumscribed, of live pigs or dead, requiring incremental return or general equivalence, exchange was a central organisational principle.

The ideology of reciprocity was common to all Highland groups but the nature of the exchange transactions contributed to differences in the style of big-men and the nature of warfare. All big-men had to be adept in exchange transactions, yet compared to ceremonial exchange in the west of the Highlands, that of the east was relatively minor (Berndt R. 1952:45, Read 1954:18, Langness 1971:309-310). Nevertheless it did exist. Some groups in the eastern Highlands conducted pig festivals that incorporated the exchange of wealth to compensate for the death of allies (Lemmonier 1991:10). The idza nama festivals of the Guhuka-Gama and other eastern groups consolidated traditional ties while ceremonially opposing outsiders. The festivals competitively initiated reciprocal obligations for individuals and groups to be fulfilled at a future date (Read 1952a:17). Although 'warfare was the archetype of "strength-demonstrating"' other pursuits like gift-giving were closely allied - the giver advantaged, the receiver disadvantaged and obliged to reciprocate (Read 1959:428).
Chimbu, Enga, Kuma and Melpa big-men also achieved their status through the skilful manipulation of exchange in times of peace or warfare (Strathern A. 1982a:141). As representatives of their groups they engaged each other in ongoing cycles of reciprocal exchange although at any point in time one would be temporarily superior, a state described by A. Strathern as 'alternating disequilibrium' (1975:222). These reciprocal relationships provided 'the context par excellence for the exercise of power' (Schiltz 1987:5), the expression of which alternated between exchange of wealth or warfare. These concepts were not antithetical. Rather feasting and fighting were the opposite aspects of a single mode of interaction (Brown D. 1988:91).

The relationship between feasting and fighting can be illustrated by the Enga saying, 'We make Te (tee) first, and then we fight' (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:149), to be interpreted either as the building of strong military alliances prior to attacking an enemy, or to the inherent instability of exchange relationships - the possibility of default and the potential conflict underlying the surface sociality. Likewise the Central Wahgi pig festival encouraged solidarity at home while it prepared for hostilities abroad (Reay 1990:71). Certainly exchange transactions were competitive and ambiguous and the more wealth that was exchanged the greater the opportunity for the creation of conflict (Schiltz 1987:6). Moka transactions for example, contained death-compensation payments for the life of a minor enemy or an ally, and although this required no material return the initiatory gift that proceeded it did so (Strathern A. 1975:94-95). Some ceremonial exchange was thus derived from war (Lemmonier 1991:10). Warfare and exchange were interwoven and the transactions open to tension and misinterpretation. The validity of promises of moka or other ceremonial gifts, or motives in general, could be concealed with veiled speech (Strathern A. 1975:117, Gordon & Meggitt 1985:146) and the exchange of gifts could just as easily become the exchange of blows that elicited the same response - that of return.

**Gender Relations and the Psychological Dimension of Warfare**

The structural properties of competitive exchange may have created the ideal conditions for conflict and war but these conditions alone cannot completely explain the Highlanders' propensity to violence (cf. Ross 1986). Disputes over women and pigs, insults and suspicion of sorcery, a desire for resources and revenge were all precipitating causes for warfare across the Highlands (Berndt R. 1964:200, Langness 1971:308). Indeed as Meggitt (1977:7) has suggested, if two groups were of a mind to fight any circumstance could be provocative. Highlanders responded to these pressures, real or imagined - and given the worry of sorcery there was always an enemy somewhere - with aggression and belligerence.

Explanations for this ethos of aggression can exhibit a circularity. Did the exigencies of warfare demand strongly bonded fighting units or did their
very existence promote it? Given the lack of knowledge of origins it is possible to suggest only that these were mutually reinforcing (Knauff 1990:285). This argument does not account for the prevalence of conflict within social groups nor the ideal that individuals, as opposed to groups, should be aggressive, forceful and violent - traits sometimes expected of women as well, albeit expressed only to other women26 (Berndt R. 1971:390-391). Neither does it explain the suspicion and hostility that men expressed towards women.

Sexual polarity, as part of a mosaic that included warfare and general exchange relationships, permeated all socio-cultural domains, sexual relationships providing a 'convenient idiom through which to register ... concerns about cultural vitality and masculine identity' (Herdt & Poole 1982:9, cf. Lattas 1990:71). Inequality between the sexes was reported across the Highlands where in all groups men claimed superiority to women (Read 1954, Reay 1959, Berndt R. 1964, Langness 1964, Meggitt 1964, Strathern A. 1979b, Godelier 1982, Josephides 1985) and male separateness and domination were characterized by residential separation and often a belief in female pollution.

This role dichotomy was expressed particularly strongly in the eastern groups. The Guhuku-Gama for example, legitimized and consolidated male superiority through initiation rites. In these young age-grouped males progressed through a series of painful rites to rid them of female contamination and convert them into culturally defined men and warriors, a process that even diminished a woman's part procreation (Read 1952a:11-14). Baruya women were 'subordinate to men materially, politically and symbolically'27 (Godelier 1982:11). Segregated spatially in village, pathways and houses they were excluded from rights in land, tools, weapons, sacred objects and exchange. Thus it was suggested that women produced nothing that men valued28 (Godelier 1982:7-11) and as 'outsiders' posed an additional threat of being enemies capable of treachery and sorcery (Berndt R. 1952:44, Read 1954:27, Langness 1964:173). Incoming wives represented a double threat - as outsiders and possible enemies, whose loyalty to the group was in doubt, and as physical beings whose polluting capabilities threatened the integrity of physical, social and spiritual boundaries29. Men were initiated into cults to both contain this threat and to organize themselves into efficient fighting units. Yet it may be argued that the very existence of the cults polarized the sexes physically and metaphorically. Langness (1967:163), extrapolating from

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26 Aggression towards other women was an ideal for Bena-Bena and Fore women (Berndt R. 1971) but not for Chimbu (Brown P. 1986) or Sambia (Herdt 1986).
27 The female shaman was the only exception to this. They complemented the work of male shamans in protecting against illness and death (Godelier 1982:21).
28 This included the conception and growth of a child. The womb only contained the child which was made by the double intervention of the man and the sun and 'fed' with repeated intercourse (Godelier 1982:14)
similar Bena-Bena examples, suggested that the exigencies of warfare were related to this distinctive pattern of gender relationships with male solidarity having 'functional' value in a hostile world.

A closer look at the workings and intellectual underpinning of the men's cults and initiation rites shows that they represented far more than a social dimension of Highland life. Indeed they '...enact(ed) a philosophy of growth, of human and cultural nature; they define(d) the separation of men and women as a biological and religious as well as a social imperative...' (Keesing 1982:3). Certain features and themes were expressed in initiation rituals and cults - the belief that 'males and females are (were) radically different in their physical and psychological being and that fluids, essences and powers of women are (were) dangerous and inimical to those of men' (Keesing 1982:7). This was not simply a case of men claiming that women were dangerous and polluting for this was a view to which women concurred (Read 1952a:14, Strathern M. 1972:163, Langness 1977:5, Meigs 1976:393). They obeyed sanctions and observed taboos to protect their husbands and their sons (Strathern M. 1972:172).

In the nama, Read (1952a:14-15) noted the pseudo-procreative aspects of the ritual and the men's recognized lack of control over childbirth, an aspect taken up by Langness with Bena-Bena examples (1977:12-15). He rejected the notion of male envy of women and placed it in the realm of male control. Bena-Bena men, having no concept of sterility, believed that their semen was the essence of procreation and that they needed women only as receptacles. Yet women in their dislike of childbirth could resort to magical and physical means of contraception or abortion so that the male's hope of having many children - which belonged to him - could be thwarted by an uncooperative wife. For the Sambia, for example, this was a serious threat because a man needed a child to complete his transition to manhood (Creed 1984:166). The nama, incorporating both phallic and uterine symbols, represented a control of all fertility and the reproductive processes in general (Langness 1977:15), male cults thus appropriating the reproductive attributes of both sexes (Whitehead 1986:274).

To survive in the eastern Highlands men perceived that they had to control the actual bodies of women and their labour as well as the social body (Langness 1977:16). Analogies were made between the sexuality of women, their wilful behaviour and the uncontrolled resources of the forest (Lindenbaum 1976:55-56). Observing the rapid growth of young females, Fore for example, associated the regularity of the female menstrual cycle with that of the reliably fruiting pandanus so that the control of women was analogous with the management of natural resources. In this area of the eastern Highlands though, there was a relative paucity of material wealth so that the fertility of women and the semen of men, particularly those groups with ritualized homosexuality, were valuable resources to control (Creed
The contention that women produced nothing that Baruya men valued (Godelier 1982:7-11, cited above) may thus be wide of the mark - women and their fecundity were perhaps perceived as the most valuable asset of all, one to be controlled at all costs. This was not simply the case of 'keeping women in their place' for the restrictions for men could be onerous - women secluded in menstrual huts left men to garden, cook and find things for themselves (Langness 1967:172). Men also faced the trauma of painful initiation and fears of biological inferiority (Read 1984:220). And women subscribed to these values. Although initiation rituals were conducted in supposed secrecy, and indeed much of their potency came from this fact (Langness 1977:17), it was clear that women shared a least some of the meanings.

In the western Highlands, sexual polarity, while not emphasized to the same degree as in the east, was nevertheless a reality. Whether or not there was a belief in the polluting power of women, like that of the Mae Enga for example (Meggitt 1964:207), men and women resided separately (Meggitt 1964:206, Strathern M. 1972:11, Brown P. 1988:126-127) and women were politically impotent. The male 'egalitarian' ethos depended on the political and economic subordination of women (Josephides 1985:8). Men in general, and polygynist big-men in particular, gained access to wealth, principally large numbers of pigs, through their wives' labour. Although women may have had a say in the distribution of pigs, for example Tombena Engan women may have had a near-equal say30 (Feil 1982:295) and Mendi women had their own exchange partners (Lederman 1980:479), it was in the actual exchange prestations and the opportunity to create obligations of reciprocity that real prestige lay (Foster 1985:187, Josephides 1985:101). Such opportunities were denied to women. Even Mendi women were restricted to the sidelines in large scale ceremonial prestations (Lederman 1980:479) and Melpa women, and lesser men, had no claim and could make no contribution to the most prestigious of exchange valuables, that of pearl-shells (Feil 1982:295-297).

Other issues were involved in gender relations in the western Highlands. Certain ceremonies and events emphasized sexual attributes, but unlike social groups in the eastern Highlands there was little uniformity in the presence or type of cults and initiation rites (Strathern A. 1970a). Yet there were recurring themes. All Highlanders had the notion of a 'blood tie' be it from one or both parents, and whether the mother's blood was included or not had implications for pollution ideas in general and initiation rites in particular (Strathern A.

30 Jorgensen (1991:260-261) disputed Feil's assessment that Enga women were less subordinate than other women. He argued that their work load in raising pigs was excessive. And as Foster (1985) and Josephides (1985) argue, status was only related to actual prestations of pigs. Reay (1990:67) also points out that the lives of Highland women observed by Feil were much changed by local government councils, coffee production, the activities of missions and improved communications. As Feil himself notes (1978:270-271), 'women sometimes do withhold their pigs to give them informally, outside tees, thereby depriving their husbands of giving them publicly', a comment that appears to confirm the fact that it is the public exchange of pigs by men that really matters.
The Kuma initiated groups of boys and young men to remove the weakness caused by their association with women (Reay 1957:424) and to urge them to be strong, to kill their enemies and avenge their clansmen (Reay 1957:426-427). Mae Engan's purification rites for male bachelors initiated fierce warriors to make them strong enough to both attract and withstand contact with women who were polluting and dangerous (Strathern A. 1970a:376). Similarly Chimbu initiated boys as young as seven, moving them into their fathers' houses and away from the dangers of women to preserve the secrets of men and maintain the subordination of women (Nilles 1950:36,48-49). In contrast to these groups and those of the east, Hageners had no initiation rites as such but confronted the issue of the control of women with female and male cults (Strathern A. 1970b:574). Of particular concern was the relationship of husband and wife - the potential danger of the outsider wife who may poison him with food or contaminate him with menstrual blood, and the positive value of sexual relationships and issues of fertility in general (Meggitt 1964:207, Strathern A. 1970b:584). Like other cults they stressed the antithetical nature of women to men and an ambivalent attitude to female strengths and weaknesses.

The principle of separating men and women could not be taken lightly, for the control of women - and the separation of antithetical objects in general - was not limited to the mundane world. Ultimately the concern was for fertility and order on a cosmic level for where the notion of life itself was seen as a concept of 'limited good', life and death were inextricably linked (Block & Parry 1982:8-9). Polarized relations between the sexes was a vital prerequisite to ensure fertility and continuity on a cosmic level, while in the mundane world they legitimized the control of men over the reproductive capacity of women and or produced or were the result of, the socialization of men into aggressive fighting units. This was particularly true in the eastern Highlands. Less obviously but no less significantly, gender relations in the western Highlands rested on similar principles that allowed men to monopolize the reproductive powers of women by promoting the participation of men in networks of reciprocal exchange (Strathern A. 1982a:140, cf. Lattas 1990:73) of which warfare was a strand.

31 Because this occurred after the great pig festival, every fifteen years or so, boys of vastly different ages were grouped together. The severity of the rites were modified to account for the boys' ages (Reay 1957:429). Chimbu boys were also initiated at pig ceremonies held every 7 to 10 years. P. Brown (1972:31) reported that for the Chimbu, initiation caused discomfort but little severe pain.

32 A. Strathern (1970a:376) wrote that fears of female pollution were 'absent apparently among the Kuma'. Reay (1957:196) however reported that wealthier men did avoid menstruating and breast-feeding women to protect their wealth and the future of the clan, and that all men avoided being with women prior to the pig festival. O'Hanlon (1989:41-42) also noted that it is believed that close continuous contact with women could make men's skin ashy and unpleasant looking and women who had just given birth or who were menstruating did not feed their husbands lest they get debilitating colds. Sexual intercourse for young men or still growing youths was also considered to be damaging.

33 A. Strathern first wrote of the tribal group, the Melpa. In later work he refers to people in this area of similar culture as Hageners, as does M. Strathern.
In both the east and the west of the Highlands the individual tendency to violence could be predicted from the strong male-female hostility and male perception of vulnerability expressed in child raising practices and socialisation. It has been argued that these psychological dimensions of warfare have been largely overlooked (Ross 1986:171, Knauf 1990:285). As noted above, the consolidation of male superiority and separateness was seen to be a biological, social and religious imperative (Keesing 1982:3). To achieve this desired state, young boys were totally removed from their mothers' security into the world of men. Sometimes this involved painful and traumatic rites of initiation, as with the Guhuka-Gama (Read 1952a:11-14) and Sambia (Herdt 1986:162) for example, and always involved residential separation, rough play, the encouragement of dominant behaviour and an emphasis on challenges, bravery and aggressiveness in general (Brown P. 1986:166-167, Herdt 1986:160-161). On the one hand this process of socialization was based on a perceived ideal of self-assertion and violent aggression while on the other it was based on uncertainty, suspicion and fear, not only from the enemy without but from the suspicion that wives and women in general might be the enemy within. Fear itself was a dynamic cultural force (Gordon 1983:208, Gordon & Meggitt 1985:147, Knauf 1990:286). Pervasive distrust in itself made for hostile relationships (Berndt R. 1962:266) so perhaps Highlanders fought because in some ways they could not stop. Apart from the impracticality of a unilateral decision not to fight (Read 1954:22, Hallpike 1973:454, Rodman 1979a:143), fear of enemy attack - fueled by suspicion and the possibility of sorcery - could make preemptive attacks a desirable strategy (Berndt R. 1962:177, Knauf 1990:287) and once initiated, vengeance was obligatory.

Fighting for Land

The principle of revenge was behind most of the reasons for fighting advanced by Highlanders themselves although it has been suggested (A. Strathern 1982a:142) that population increases and land pressure increase the likelihood of vengeance being pursued. In certain areas of the Highlands, particularly in the east, the desire for land was not given as a reason for fighting and enemies driven from their land were allowed to return (Berndt R. 1964:200, Langness 1964:173). This was true also for the southern Kewa (Josephides 1985:28). Amongst other Highland groups attitudes varied, as did population densities, settlement patterns and types of warfare. For example, Meggitt (1977:9,11-14) argued that the Mae Enga were explicitly interested in competing for land. Carefully planned invasions of coveted territory aimed to destroy the occupiers so that in principle they could never regroup and reclaim the land (Meggitt 1974:197). In contrast, the Kuma considered that they had land in abundance and too few people (Reay 1971:175,184). Yet the concept of 'land-shortage' was difficult to objectively quantify. In the absence of reliable statistics, the issue rested on whether or not the people themselves subjectively felt this to be the case (Sillitoe 1977:74-75) and over time this
opinion could change. Although land pressure and warfare appeared to be related in certain Highland areas, and Enga and Chimbu reported that disputes over land were important reasons for fighting, ecological pressures were interwoven with other social and cultural constraints (Knauft 1990:270-271).

In his introductory chapter to Blood is Their Argument (1977), Meggitt argued that that the basic preoccupation of the Mae Enga was the possession and defense of clan land, with the prestige of tēe transactions being but a means to this end. Each clan tried to engage publicly in the greatest possible number of Tē (tēe) transactions in pigs with its neighbours so that in time its credits will exceed its debts' (1977:9), with a view to gaining the support of allies and attracting new wives, who in turn would produce future warriors to defend clan land. Meggitt's analysis of Mae Engan warfare and its outcome claimed that they believed that they needed more land and that violence was an effective way of getting it (1977:14). Mae Engans may have seemed preoccupied with the redistribution of scarce land and a concern with the lack of resources that was exacerbated by the intensive rearing of pigs, yet during the later 1960's clansmen were prepared to allow estranged members to return to help to defend clan land (1977:27). In so doing they had to cede precious land to the newcomers which presumably intensified the shortage of land. Although Meggitt had previously claimed that Mae religious dogmas and ritual activities reflected 'a sort of stolid and joyless realism' (1965:130), the energy that they devoted to pigs and exchange would suggest that these very activities represented something more than economic and political concerns (Strathern A. 1984:19). When considered in relation to socialization and child rearing practices, the segregation of men and women and the creation of strong clansmen discussed above, the desire for land would seem to have been a superficial reason for fighting. A desire for more land could certainly provoke fighting but not necessarily explain the deep-seated reasons for fighting. Perhaps the supreme value accorded to land represented its fertility and ability to sustain life rather than its scarcity as such (Strathern A. 1984:19).

The Kuma were expressly interested in fertility - of pigs, gardens and the clan (Reay 1959:290). Ceremonial gift giving and warfare were both expressions of the hope to increase fertility and the prosperity of the clan with the exchange of pigs and women. The aim of warfare was not to annex land (Reay 1964:242) and abandoned land, protected by sorcery traps, remained unoccupied34 (Reay 1971:184). While it is true that population pressure for the Kuma was far less than that of the Enga, the concern with fertility and its sustenance was the underlying concern of all. The religious dimension of warfare is developed below.

34 Hageners did not set sorcery traps but they were afraid of the ancestral ghosts of men buried on the defeated group's territory. They were likely to destroy property and then retreat unless able to destroy the ceremonial ground and thus drive the ancestral spirits away (Strathern A. 1975:67).
In the past however, it has been reported that some Highlanders did fight with the expressed aim of obtaining more land whatever the underlying reasons. Given that much contemporary warfare has taken place in areas with relatively high population densities - Chimbu, Enga and Hagen (Strathern A. 1977:143) - the place of land and its relation to warfare and other social and cultural dimensions of life cannot be ignored. This is particularly so because some groups who previously did not fight for land apparently do so now. Perhaps they have come to perceive that land is a resource that can be exchanged for money or for the production of cash-crops and is thus worth fighting for (Strathern A. 1982a:142). Land and its relation to contemporary war is discussed again in Chapter 4.

The Absence of a Mediator

A constant theme in the analysis of 'tribal' warfare was the extent to which peaceful settlements of disputes - between individuals or groups - was possible. The examination of this issue was particularly pursued by Koch (1974, 1979) who used the Highland Jale as an example of a people whose political organization failed to provide a peaceful means of resolving disputes. Certainly conciliation and compromise could be urged by affines and allies and compensation could be arranged and peacemaking accomplished through the mediating skills of big-men. Such measures though were insufficient to prevent violent retaliation in any particular conflict (Koch 1974:16). That quarrels escalated into warfare was explained in terms of an individual being socialized to seek violent redress and by Jale social organization preventing the development of third party institutions that could intervene (1974:16-17). Warfare therefore was ultimately explained as a breakdown or absence of a peaceful method of dispute settlement (Koch 1974 also Podolefsky 1990:72).

In a similar vein Hallpike (1973:454) maintained that in acephalous societies the absence of a central authority condemned people to fight for ever and the Tauade society therefore was 'a complex system from which bloodshed, warfare and vengeance cannot be eradicated by internal processes' (Hallpike 1977:275). In his analysis of Tauade life Hallpike presented clear reasons why warfare flourished - the ease of pig production, the networks of exchange, the intensity of personal interaction and an ethos of aggression - unconstrained by concepts of overall social order. The 'fact' that without the mediation of a third party the cycle of revenge could not be broken, presented fighting and vengeance as a system with failed conflict management or lack of social controls. Hallpike's interpretation and overall tone of condemnation of Tauade fighting was based on Western categories that determined the framework of his analysis (Knauft 1990:286). Similarly, Koch's analysis of Jale conflict management was described 'in terms of political aims quite alien to their world' (Strathern M. 1985:121).
Viewing disputes as a disruption of social relations prejudges the nature of violent and peaceful behaviour (Strathern M. 1985:122) and implicitly suggests that fighting represented a breakdown of relationships. Highlanders however, considered that disputes were 'the very stuff of social life' (Brown D. 1988:102) - it was with strangers with whom they did not fight (Berndt R 1971:393). Disputes were never finished - the more they were settled the more they would erupt (Strathern M. 1985:122-123). Despite the intensity of warfare in many areas, opponents were not there to be annihilated but to be fought35 (Berndt R. 1962:414), for it was important to have someone to fight (and feast) with (Brown D. 1988:91). For the Gahuku, for example, it was Read's interpretation that enemies were as necessary as friends (1965:45).

Frequently it has been assumed that ceremonial exchange, as a non-violent transaction, was intended to control or replace one of violence. Again, such an interpretation gives precedence to 'peaceful' interactions. Exchange relationships described as integrative or as competitive substitutes for fighting, were thus interpreted as another form of social control. Yet it is questionable that ceremonial exchange did promote peace (Harrison 1993:8).

As Harrison (1993:8) extrapolated from the studies of Lederman (1986), clan exchanges could not promote peace because their purpose was to create these clans (Harrison's emphasis). The Hobbesian paradigm - where individuals must renounce their autonomy to come together in social groups - does not apply to all groups. The Daribi (Wagner 1974) and the Wahgi (O'Hanlon 1989) did not see the formation of social relations and ties between groups as problematical. It was the creation of boundaries and divisions that were troublesome (Harrison 1993:9, Harrison's emphasis). A clan needed be created in competition to other social ties - 'it is a group of men acting as if the only social relationship they had were those that link them to each other' (Harrison 1993:10, Harrison's emphasis). Ceremonial exchange therefore did not create allies, rather it defined the group36. 'Whether in feasting or in feuding, opposed groups implicitly collaborate in maintaining one another as distinct identities. Even violent aggression is a kind of collusion between the two sides' (Harrison 1993:17). From an indigenous perspective the idea that violent interaction represented ruptured relationships, or conversely that exchange transactions were elements in social control, is meaningless.

To consider that conflict needs to be mediated or that a mediator should be sought, casts conflict as a problematic issue. This a culturally specific question - a Western construct (Strathern M. 1985:113, Knauft 1990:279). Certainly a theme of 'deficient social controls' continues to be explored as an

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35 Harrison (1993:11) has argued that even where it was claimed that there had been great destruction, what was really lost was the actual group identity, not the population of that group. Individuals could seek refuge with allies and affines.
36 An explicit distinction drawn in any exchange was one between those who share meat or other wealth and those who exchange meat or wealth (Wagner 1974:110, Wagner's emphasis).
explanation of contemporary disputes. Gordon (1983:212) for example, pointing to the deficiency of present day magistrate's courts, finds that they cannot repair 'ruptured social relationships' produced by disputes. But given that the arrival of the colonial administration did introduce a third party that appeared to make people give up fighting, this point of view requires attention. Whether or not the colonial administration, as mediator, did create the conditions for peace, and whether or not these conditions deteriorated as a result of administrative deficiencies is explored in Chapters 3 and 4.

Reciprocity, Revenge and Religious Imperatives

Warfare was precipitated by many things - women, pigs, insults, suspicion of sorcery, a desire for land or resources and the intention to exact revenge. It was a feature of ordinary social living, an anticipated part of life to which Highland groups were ideally structured to respond. This was to be expected because the very nature of exchange transactions - of gifts or blows - created these Highland groups. In particular it created groups of men. Rough play and the encouragement of dominant behavior and aggressive traits - and in the eastern Highlands traumatic initiation rites as well - converted boys into culturally defined warriors. Residential separation of men and women, a focus on cults and the activities of the men's house, antipathy between the sexes and often a belief in female pollution consolidated the male groups and produced strongly bonded fighting units. These were clearly capable of fighting but why were they so willing to do so? Although the stated aims of destruction were rarely achieved, death and destruction were an ever-present reality and a decision to fight could not be taken lightly.

Highlanders did not fight because they had the capacity to do so, or because they chose to - rather they fought because they were compelled. Regardless of the immediate provocation, the principle of revenge made warfare a necessity. Revenge was a permanent part of people's thinking (Berndt R. 1971:392, Glasse & Lindendaum 1971:367), Opeba 1978:91, Sillitoe 1979:77, Reay 1982:635) and warfare rested on the principle of retaliation and the hope of creating a kind of balance, albeit asymmetrical at any point in time, to offset damage, injuries and deaths from the past (Berndt R. 1962:266-267). Nothing happened by chance (Nilles 1950:62). Where others had taken a life - by physical violence or supernatural means - there was a moral obligation to balance the account. The obligation to exact revenge was to the living and the dead, not just to vent anger and sorrow but to deny the opposing individuals power that could disrupt the balance (Sillitoe 1979:77). When a man was killed his closest agnates and his clansmen in general were bound to avenge his death because his death represented the depletion of the clan as well as the loss of an individual (Reay 1982:635).

Highlanders had been portrayed as pragmatic people, secular in outlook and little concerned with religion and religious beliefs (Lawrence & Meggitt
1965:23), a view that Lawrence (1988) did little to alter when he reassessed his original stance. Instead, he protested that the early ethnographic material from which he and Meggitt extrapolated reflected the theoretical perspectives of their ethnographers which limited their interest to structure, function and social order (Lawrence 1988:9-12, cf. Read 1984:222 & Knauff 1990:266, 279). Read's contemporary work and subsequent review of his material (1952a & b, 1955, 1984) demonstrated that for the Guhuku-Gama at least, this was not necessarily the case and that religious beliefs affirmed and supported the order behind all aspects of social life (Read 1952b:238).

At the heart of Guhuku-Gama religion was a generalized concept of life force and ancestral power, 'not located in time or space, but deriving from the past and continuing into the future', upon which society depended for its continuity and existence (Read 1952b:236). Not named or formulated in explicit dogma, its existence and nature was inferred from human behavior. Men were the medium through which the force was approached. Although generalized, the force had a connection with the spirits of the dead, and men could access it via the ancestors in the fertility rite, nama ge'isa, symbolized and mediated through the playing of the nama flutes37 (1952b:238). The human individual was a biological whole made up of interrelated organs of varying significance, fused with a psychic force (Read 1955:265) - a breath-soul, the principle of life which animated the physical organism (Read 1955:269. cf. also to Reay 1957:325 speaking of the Kuma). Death was the end of individuality as the life principle departed from the world of the living into the realm of impersonal ancestral power and the life force. The Guhuku-Gama had to 'behave in accepted ways, fulfil their obligations and preserve the established forms of relationships ... (to) obtain the benefits of collective existence' provided by the supernatural power with its links to the past the present and the future (Read 1952a:10). Just as the separation of men and women was seen to be a biological, social and religious imperative, the exacting of retribution for death was equally so. The concept of strength subsumed the ideal qualities of maleness (Read 1984:224, Read's emphasis). True strength required males and their groups 'to assert their ascendancy over others. Equality was antithetical to the grand ideal of masculinity' and 'as the contest of strength seesawed back and forth between enemy groups (and also in the context of ceremonial exchanges between friendly groups in the idza nama ceremony), so it also teetered on the fulcrum of ideologies of sexual oppositions' (Read 1984:233, my emphasis). All matters of collective well-being depended on the ritual ascendancy of men that 'cement(ed) the building blocks of an edifice that included ceaseless warfare' (Read 1984:244).

37 The sacred nama flutes, made from bamboo, were played at major ceremonies and festivals. Their playing linked men to their ancestral past and their tunes were symbols of unity. In theory their existence was a secret from women, and certainly for women to see them destroyed their power (Read 1952a:6-8). The flutes were common to all the eastern groups, and the Waghi (Reay 1990:68) and the Chimbu (Warry 1987:78) areas also.
Although ethnographers in the western Highlands had been less inclined to consider the religious underpinnings of social life, similar themes could be deduced from existing material, or were subsequently made explicit in later writings (Reay 1987a). No less religious was the Wahgi people's (Kuma) idea of "tol y' b' - 'the thinking of the dead and how to avenge them' - with the associated rituals of revenge and rites to protect the avenger from the angry ghosts of those that he had killed in turn (Reay 1982:635). It was true to say that Highlanders were pragmatic and for the Kuma this included guaranteeing the co-operation of the spirits, particularly in helping them to handle their enemies (Reay 1987a:85). The war sorcerers38, exemplary citizens and credible warriors, maintained the war magic houses and their ritual contents, constructed the sorcery traps that protected clan land, carefully observed the restrictions of fire taboos39 and most importantly continued to decimate their enemies with sorcery in times of 'peace', considered essential for the clan's continued existence (Reay 1957:361). Also essential for the continuity of the clan was the pig ceremonial. In this was expressed an overriding concern with the fertility of pigs, gardens and the clan, which included sexual polarity and the careful sustaining of traditional enmities (Reay 1959:290). Thus the Kuma also sustained their world, social and cosmic, with balanced oppositions and a concern with equivalence.

Generalizing from the particular, Lawrence and Meggitt (1965:18-19), suggested that in the Highlands secular techniques alone, like hard physical work and personal strength, were sufficient to guarantee the success of many important leadership tasks without the associated use of ritual. This argument depends upon both separating the concepts of 'work' and of 'ritual' and giving one or other priority (cf. Strathem A. 1979c:89). For Hageners though, such divisions were not so clear cut because with a holistic view of life, ritual was 'work' - hard work, support from the spirits and appropriate moral behaviour were intertwined (Strathem A. 1979c:90). Hagen religious life focused on the cyclical performances of the Male and Female Spirit cults. Both cults were the concerns of men. Through them men hoped to control of the sources of fertility and cosmic renewal. This was particularly so with the Female Spirit cult which provided for the successful reproduction of children, pigs, plants and the protection of men from the deadly powers of menstruating women. Meanwhile the issues of day to day life - morality and sickness and success in economic and political life, warfare and exchange - were in the hands of household heads, big-men or ritual experts who observed the requirements of the ghost cult and kept a proper relationship with the ancestral ghosts. Ghosts were of constant background importance to the living, communicating through a person's noman - a state of social consciousness, thought, feeling or intention

38 An inherited position as long as there was a suitable son, otherwise a close agnate would be taught the skills (Reay 1987a:85).
39 Sorcerers were denied the informality of communal eating. They were unable to eat food cooked at their families fire or to accept food cooked by others. This was to protect himself from his enemies and to prevent his own magic rebounding unintentionally on himself (Reay 1957:376).
sited within a person's chest - and with the ghosts' beneficial presence in particular being solicited with the sacrifice of pigs. It was implicit that every act of killing and consuming pigs involved the ghosts (Strathern A. 1979c:91). Anger, frustration or the desire for revenge (popokl) could upset the correct alignment of the noman, threatening human and ancestral relationships and requiring sacrifice to repair (Strathern M. 1968:553-554, Strathern A. 1972:144). It was an ideal that big-men should not suffer from popokl and that they seek compensation not violent revenge. In practice though the ideal was dichotomous, for big-men could make war and peace, and seek equivalence in fighting or compensation (Strathern A. 1975:77-78). They acted in the expectation that 'all the ghosts should come and "walk at the head" of their people, and help them to kill enemies, make exchanges, and obtain wives' (Strathern A. 1972:26).

Although Read (1952a & b, 1955, 1984), Reay (1957, 1959, 1987a) and Strathern A. (1972, 1975, 1979c) were focusing on the Gahuku-Gama, Kuma and Hageners respectively, the essence of religious concerns they describe condense many of the issues raised here for the Highlands in general - the nature of leadership and the precarious balancing of strength and equivalence, the uncertainty of masculinity expressed in antithetical relations with females, the balancing of never-ending reciprocal obligations and a tenuous control of fertility and the continuity of life. Certainly the ideology of reciprocity that underpinned all forms of exchange was a powerful organizational principle with many social implications. More significantly, the obligation to exact revenge was a religious as well as a social imperative.

Overview

To a certain extent Highlanders fought because they could not stop. A web of relationships that linked warfare to every thread of social life virtually made warfare inevitable. Moreover, warfare itself helped to define the nature of Highland social groups because in the face of endemic warfare, group strength was essential. With mutually reinforcing circularity, the exigencies of war promoted the formation of strongly bonded fighting units, while the existence of such groups made it unimaginable that they could make a unilateral decision not to fight. Neither were men organized into groups simply to fight the enemy without. To varying degrees, women were believed to be the enemy within, so that initiation, cult activity and residential separation also defined groups of men. These were the same groups that fought and entered into exchange relationships in general. Highlanders did not fight simply because they were capable of doing so, they fought because the principle of revenge made warfare a necessity.
The compulsion to exact revenge was one aspect of the principle of reciprocity that underpinned all forms of exchange. Exchange was a mode of interaction by which individuals and groups organized their social and religious lives. Groups were held together by big-men, who, apart from being great warriors (or at least highly proficient ones), excelled at conducting exchange transactions of all kinds. Even the most congenial of exchange transactions had the capacity to be competitive and ambiguous and once initiated, transactions had to be reciprocated to achieve balance and equivalence. The obligation to equalize relationships applied to both the living and the dead and household heads and big-men were compelled to maintain proper relationships with the ancestral ghosts. The balancing of strength and equivalence was all the more precarious because of the antithetical relationship between men and women that revealed a deep uncertainty as to whether men could sustain life and cosmic continuity. Thus Highlanders fought, not because of non-existent or deficient social controls but because they were fighting for their lives, literally and metaphorically.

This was the state of Highland life that the colonial administration sought to 'pacify'. White men appeared to possess great strength and brought with them material rewards that they were prepared to share. In return they seemed to demand only that Highlanders stop fighting with their enemies - which for a while they did. The administration, viewing events from one perspective, believed itself to be a powerful mediator who could demand 'law and order' and institute 'social controls'. It remained to be seen, however, if this was a realistic assessment of 'pacification'.
CHAPTER 3: PACIFICATION

Definition

Until the publication of The Pacification of Melanesia (Rodman & Cooper 1979) the assumptions and implications represented by the term 'pacification' had not been critically examined. It appeared that most researchers believed that conflict, not peace, needed to be explained (Koch 1979:200, Gregor 1990:121). The writers who contributed to The Pacification of Melanesia argued long over what 'pacification' actually meant (Rodman 1979b) and eventually most agreed that pacification is a period or a process of encapsulation whereby a native people's use of violence is restricted by the demands of an encapsulating power (Rodman 1979b:1, Ploeg 1979:161). By definition this is a relationship between two unequal parties (Rodman 1979b:22). Partly because of this, the process of pacification, if it had been critically considered at all, has usually been recorded from a colonial perspective - a perspective that implicitly considers peace to be a desirable outcome of Western intervention. It is easy to overlook the fact that both parties can actively participate in the encapsulation and influence the events that follow (Zelenietz 1979:91). Also easy to overlook is the historical context of pacification and the fact that the goals of the encapsulating power - as well as those of the encapsulated - can change over time (Rodman 1979b:22).

The coastal and insular societies which provide the main focus of The Pacification of Melanesia (1979) are socially, culturally and historically different from each other and from those of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. Indeed pacification itself was experienced by different peoples in many differing ways (Koch 1979:200). Yet an examination of these differences and the way that pacification was achieved may help to identify the factors that contributed to long-lasting peace in certain parts of Melanesia. It may also provide a conceptual framework within which to assess the process of pacification and its apparent instability in the Highlands.

The Pacification of Insular Melanesia

Unlike the Highlanders, insular Melanesians and white men had long been aware of each other's existence. Initial violent interactions that followed European discovery, together with suspicion, rumors and incidents of real violence, contributed to the slow extension of colonial control in Melanesia (Knauft 1990:251). Western traders and labour recruiters though, preceding the colonial administration by some seventy-five years, reciprocated the violence of the Melanesians - an alternating pattern of trade and violence that fitted easily with the indigenous conceptions of reciprocal exchange. The

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40 Over a 17 year period the Journal of Peace Research offered approximately 400 articles of which only a single paper studied the nature of a peaceful society (Wilberg 1981, cited in Gregor 1990:121).
relative symmetry in their relations was destroyed in the 1860's by the advent
of the repeating rifle which placed the ultimate control of violence in the hands
of white men (Knauf 1990:252). Indigenous violence increased however. As
an incentive for recruitment, returning plantation labourers were rewarded with
iron tools and guns\textsuperscript{41}. Apart from the inconvenience of moving recruiting sites,
it mattered little to the labour recruiters that access to firepower allowed
warfare to escalate. Warfare in effect benefited recruitment, for a desire for
guns motivated labourers to volunteer and prisoners of war provided reluctant
recruits (Rodman 1979b:3-7).

The abuses of the labour trade and Western repugnance to feuding and
ritual murder provided incentives for the increasing intervention of colonial
governments. Outwardly pacification - the banning of cannibalism,
headhunting and warfare - was a moral imperative for colonial administrators.
In reality the situation was more complex (Rodman 1979b:2). Once colonial
governments were persuaded that stability was necessary to enhance the
development of island plantation economies and realized that they needed to
demonstrate the prestige and strength of understaffed administrations
(Boutilier 1979:43-44,77), they took a more active role in promoting peace.
Pacification was pursued systematically by the colonial governments after
encapsulation of the Melanesian islands became crucial to European political
and commercial concerns (Rodman 1979b:7). Once this occurred, government
policy on pacification coincided with the objectives of the missionaries\textsuperscript{42}.

The missions may have been opposed to some commercial and
government policies, but as agents of Westernization and religious change,
missions were seen to be advantageous for the administration as they helped to
consolidate and legitimize colonial institutions on the islands (Boutilier
believed the administration and missions to be one and the same. Impressed
with Western ships, tools and firepower and acting on the assumption that
knowledge and power were intimately linked, the islanders assumed that much
knowledge must have been incorporated in the foreigners' religion.
Membership of the Christian faith seemed to confer real advantages. Apart
from the implied access to Western power, education, goods and services,
Christian ethics promoted peace, freed women in particular from many taboos,
and to a certain degree liberated some people from the fear of ghosts and
sorcery (Boutilier 1978b:89). Thus islanders sought to share in the new
knowledge and wealth and freedom that was perceived to accompany it, by

\textsuperscript{41} The enthusiasm for guns was such that after Queensland prohibited the gifts of guns Melanesians
were happy to work on the plantations in Fiji in order to obtain them (Rodman 1979b:6, 22, note 3).
\textsuperscript{42} 'Missionaries' refer exclusively to those of the Christian faith. In New Guinea the immigration
laws operated to prevent the entry of agents of non-Christian faiths. In 1949 the Legislative Council
inserted 'Christian' before the provision allowing for mission representation (McAuley 1955:144). It
was not until August 1994 that construction of the first Mosque in P.N.G. was reported (P.N.G.
Times 11 August, 1994).

Pacification therefore represented far more than colonial administrative policy and the combined effects of commercial and mission activity. Many islanders actively participated in the process of pacification which began well before pacification became a formal government policy. Some Melanesians used the coming of white men to their own advantage, capitalizing on trade, travel and where possible assistance against enemies (Rodman 1979b: 3). Indentured labourers returned home with new ideas as well as tools and guns, their cultural horizons broadened by the realization that there were other places to live and work and different ways of doing things (Rodman 1979b:3-7, Boutilier 1979:51, Tonkinson 1982:80,82). Others compared the knowledge and power of Europeans - material goods, medical skills and superiority over evil spirits - to that of their big-men and found the traditional leaders wanting (Harwood 1978:239).

Some of the interlocking issues involved in pacification can be illustrated from the experience of the island societies on Malaita, New Georgia and Santa Isabel in the Solomons. The common thread in the history of these islands is that peace came less from colonial coercion and more from internal initiatives as islanders responded to external influences and actively sought peace (Boutilier 1979:79, White 1979:109, Zelenietz 1979:91). The advent of peace was remarkable because raiding, killing and headhunting were institutionalized aspects of social and cultural life (Boutilier 1979:43, White 1979:109, Zelenietz 1979:91-92). Raiding and headhunting expeditions provided valuable economic acquisitions (Zelenietz 1979:97), as well as the requisite heads that were essential for many aspects of political and religious life - the dedication of war canoes and canoe houses, the initiation of boys into manhood, the image of a warrior as a masculine ideal, the consolidation of power and political prestige, the criteria for leadership and the validation of supernatural power (Zelenietz 1979:99-101, White 1979:112-115).

The arrival of foreign traders, recruiters and the differential availability of new goods had a profound effect on the islands. Access to iron tools increased the production of traditional and new crops (Boutilier 1979:46-47) and the opportunity to trade in tools and convert free time into increased raiding activity (Zelenietz 1979:102). Those with guns took the advantage in warfare and fighting escalated, as did the power of some big men (Zelenietz 1979:103, Boutilier 1979:47, White 1979:118). Yet the escalation of headhunting ultimately promoted its total demise. On New Georgia, increased raiding from enemies newly armed with repeating rifles, forced entire populations to seek protection in the interior of the island, a move that denied them access to the production of copra and trade and thus the acquisition of prized Western goods (Zelenietz 1979:103). As the economic advantages of headhunting had declined with the introduction of foreign trade, a decrease in availability of
tortoiseshell and the inflation of shell money, big-men too perceived the commercial advantages of peace. Big-men had the power and the authority to forge alliances and cease raiding, while missionaries offered an alternate set of religious beliefs and rituals to fill the gap left by the cessation of headhunting\(^43\) (Zelentietz 1979:106-107, White 1979:123,126). Consolidating their personal influence and seeking access to new sources of prestige and power, big-men took the initiative in propagating peace and embracing Christian teachings. In time this transformed the criteria for leadership as warrior big-men declined in significance (White 1979:133). Sometimes though the push for peace came from ordinary people who had lost confidence in traditional institutions (Boutilier 1979:52, White 1979:124). Like the islanders of New Georgia and Santa Isabel, the Longanan people in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu), sought to end fighting and 'the days of never-ending revenge' (Rodman 1979a:141). They rejected their despotic leaders and accepted the material and spiritual rewards offered by the missions and government - new land tenure practices, economic opportunities and freedom from attack (Rodman 1979a:151-154). The colonial administration did apply pressure for islanders to cease raiding and killing, but pragmatic commercial concerns made stability desirable for all concerned while the missions supplied the necessary cultural innovation to institutionalize peace (Rodman 1979a: 146, White 1979: 110,123, Zelenietz 1979:104). The successful suppression of warfare was thus achieved through holistic change (White 1979:100).

Pacification in insular Melanesia was a lengthy process, the culmination of commercial, administrative and spiritual influence from the encapsulating powers, that was successful only after the active co-operation of the encapsulated. It was achieved by the destruction of the indigenous way of life because 'peace' was not simply a neutral category, the opposite of a state of war, but rather a reorganizing and restructuring of many aspects of social and cultural life (cf. Josephides 1985:82).

Pacification in the Highlands

The establishment of 'peace' in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea by the Australian administration was ostensibly a significant accomplishment. Indeed the fulfilment of this goal was reportedly the colonial government's finest achievement (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:162). Compared with insular Melanesia, Highland pacification was apparently achieved with relative ease and speed (Berndt 1962:383, Watson 1964:6, Strathern A. 1977:137, Gordon 1983:208). A few white men with guns, assisted by coastal police, used their superior weaponry to persuade Highlanders to curb their warfaring ways. Yet this impression was flawed, partly because it represented the colonial perception of how pacification was achieved. As time passed and warfare

\(^{43}\) On New Georgia, missionaries arrived two years after headhunting ceased, their late arrival to this island partly attributed to a fear of the islanders' warlike reputation (Zelenietz 1979:107).
resumed it became clear that peace was transitory. The temporary cessation of warfare owed as much to the Highlanders' participation in the peace process and their perception of white men and their ultimate goals, as it did to colonial power.

That Highlanders' assessment of white men and the long-term implication of their presence was impaired, was a result of geographic and historic circumstance. Unlike insular Melanesians, Highlanders' experience of white men, be they administrators, missionaries or men with commercial interests, was limited. The exploratory expeditions of prospectors, whose purpose Highlanders did not understand (Strathern A. 1992:232), were followed quickly by missionaries and administrators. Soon after first contact and the rush of prospecting and missionary activity, the Australian administration took the initiative in restricting access to the Highlands until it was considered safe and appropriate for outsiders to enter44 (Connolly & Anderson 1987:262). From the outset, pacification was an administrative concern, rather than a belated response to commercial demands and increasing disorder.

Highlanders' Participation in Pacification

The arrival of white men in the Highlands in the early 1930's had been variously heralded by the sight of aircraft, reports of the effects of firearms and the appearance of steel tools and other valuables, particularly an influx of pearl and other shells (Berndt R. 1962:2, 1971:414, Strathern A. 1977:137, 1984:20). The possession of such powerful and precious objects and the pallor of their skin assigned white men a place in existing categories of spirit people45 so that the advent of white men was not as 'uniquely untoward' as they reported - they stood less in awe of white men as beings and more in interest of what they could appropriate for themselves (Strathern M. 1990:31). The borrowing of cultural forms was not alien to the Highlanders (Lacey 1973:91). Like island Melanesians before them, they perceived that the material power possessed by white men was indicative of spiritual power (Berndt 1962:4, Plog 1979:174, Strathern A. 1984:21, Connolly & Anderson 1987:259) and they had every expectation that this power was transferable to themselves (Strathern M. 1990:31-32). The realization that white men may have been ordinary, not supernatural beings did not detract from the Highlanders'

44 The killing of missionaries in the uncontrolled areas revealed the lack of power of the administration and so controls were called for (Connolly & Anderson 1987:216). Where missionaries and miners were established, at Mount Hagen for example, Highlanders had greater experience of white men. In other areas they had only fleeting contact with outsiders (Connolly & Anderson 1987:216-218).

45 Hageners and Engans thought them to be sky people (Strathern A. 1984:20, Gordon 1983:208), the people of Pangia compared them to spirits of the water-courses (Strathern A. 1984:20), to the Chimbu they were ancestral ghosts (Brown P. 1982:534) and the Waghi could not decide if they were sky beings or ancestral ghosts (O'Hanlon 1989:13). In the eastern Highlands the Kamano, Usurufa, Jate and Fore believed the white men to be spirits of dead kin or direct creations of the spirit beings (Berndt R. 1962:46).
perception that white men had secret knowledge and a line to power and a relationship was sought with white men in the hope of accessing such power (Clark 1988:41, 52). This was not to suggest that they necessarily expected white men to stay for ever\textsuperscript{46}. Frequently the opposite was true. The sojourn of spirit beings on earth was expected to be fleeting\textsuperscript{47} (Meggitt 1977:147). Temporary cooperation, principally the cessation of warfare, appeared a small concession to make to enhance a relationship that could lead to wealth and power, particularly when many believed that the white men would depart leaving the way open for culturally valued warfare to resume (Reay 1964:247-249, 1974:205, Gordon 1983:209). The advent of World War II appeared to support this opinion as recruitment to the armed forces depleted administrative staff (Meggitt 1977:145-146) and miners and missionaries were evacuated (Berndt R. 1962:383, Connolly & Anderson 1987:271). The four military posts that operated during the war were largely self-contained and interaction with Highlanders, except for those in close proximity, was drastically reduced as was the flow of pearlshells (Connolly & Anderson 1987:2271)\textsuperscript{48}.

In the west of the Highlands in particular, the presence of prized pearlshells, imported in inflationary amounts by white men, sometimes had a pacifying effect in itself\textsuperscript{49} (Leahy & Crain 1937:272, Feil 1982:301). Miners, missionaries and their employees purchased their food with shells. Benefits flowed to all, big-men and ordinary. With new wealth at their disposal, Highlanders had the potential to replenish reduced stocks of pigs (which had been sold to the white men) with purchases from old enemies, a process that needed a degree of peace and cooperation. Mae Engans, newly rich, consolidated peaceful relations by discharging outstanding homicide debts (Meggitt 1977:141). Big-men may have lost their monopoly of shell valuables (Feil 1982) but some of the skills that made big-men powerful in 'traditional' society - the ability to manipulate people, wealth and prestige through exchange - were equally useful in allowing big-men to capitalize on the new wealth that flowed in.

Many were willing to co-operate with the new administration. The white men's restriction on warfare brought many benefits, material and otherwise. The Siane for example, welcomed an outside arbitrator (Salisbury 1962:123). As victims took their revenge after an escalating period of warfare, the

\textsuperscript{46} Although Brown (1982:534) reported that the Simbu did expect the new white rule to be permanent, Kuma (Reay 1964:247, 1974:205), Engans (Gordon 1983:209) and others thought otherwise.

\textsuperscript{47} White men brought no wives or children, made no gardens and raised no pigs. This was thus consistent with the idea that they were sky people whose stay was temporary (Meggitt 1977:147).

\textsuperscript{48} The exception to this was at Goroka, where an airfield was constructed with a large Highland labour force and the presence of many servicemen. The other bases were located at Kainantu, Bena Bena and Mount Hagen (Connolly & Anderson 1987:271).

\textsuperscript{49} This was particularly true in areas close to distribution points, like Hagen for example (Feil 1982:302). Photographs taken in 1937 by Dan Leahy show Hagen men and women displaying their newly acquired shell wealth (Connolly & Anderson 1987:252-253).
violence was compounded by deaths from dysentery\(^{50}\) and resulting sorcery accusations. The violence was such that non-combatant groups called for help to break the cycle of war (Salisbury 1962:123). Similarly the Auyana, neighbours of the Tairora, appreciated the administration's ban on warfare because a man 'could now eat without looking over his shoulder and could leave his house to urinate without fear of being shot' (Robbins 1982:189, cited by Feil 1987:69). Similarly Nilles (1953:21) reported that the Chimbu believed they could travel without fear of ambush and sleep in peace at night without being on the look-out for raids. Langness has postulated a relationship between warfare, male solidarity and hostility between the sexes (1967:163). The rapid change in residential sleeping arrangements that accompanied the administration's ban on warfare would seem to lend some support to his thesis. By 1954 Read (1954:13) was using the past tense to describe how Guhuku-Gama men resided separately in the men's houses. Similarly, though somewhat later, Bena-Bena men began sleeping in the houses of their wives\(^{51}\) (Langness 1967:175). This pattern of change was particularly true for the eastern Highlands although Mae Engan men also, supposedly no longer having to reside together for military purposes, built small family homes near their gardens (Meggitt 1977:153). Liberated from the threat of warfare, sexual polarity seemed less of an imperative and men chose to live in closer proximity to their wives. Whether or not residential arrangements and male-female relations changed only because warfare had ceased is examined again below.

Freedom from fighting proved to be advantageous in many ways - it opened up disputed land for food and coffee gardens, permitted new residential arrangements, enhanced opportunities for exchange and allowed freedom of travel (Standish 1973:8, Meggitt 1977:153-154, Gordon 1983:209, Connolly & Anderson 1987:268). People moved from the ridges to the valleys. Land that was previously disputed territory, no-man's land or fighting grounds, was opened up for cultivation (Standish 1973:8), as was land that previously grew defensive stands of cane grass (Meggitt 1977:154). New roads, seen as extensions of government stations, initially aided both peace initiatives and the freedom to travel for business or pleasure (Meggitt 1977:153-154) and applied equally to men and women (Connolly & Anderson 1987:268). Their time liberated by the use of steel tools and no longer

\(^{50}\) Salisbury did not report the origin of the dysentery epidemic. However allied soldiers stationed in Goroka during the war carried dysentery into the Highlands. Lacking immunity, many thousands of Highlanders were reported to have died although serious demographic consequences were averted by the use of sulphaguanidine (Mair 1948:197-198, Finney 1973:27-29). Ferguson (1990:52) noted that the consequences of introduced diseases needs to be considered in the study of indigenous warfare.  

\(^{51}\) It should be noted however that Bena-Bena men made many excuses to justify this move, claiming (incorrectly) that it was demanded by the administration or a convenient necessity to protect them from walking in the rain. In resisting the move they argued that they did not wish their wives to see them naked (although they would strip naked in front of women to cross rivers) or that their work would suffer without clan meetings (in fact they still met every morning). The real stumbling block was the continued existence of the flutes. Although they were no longer used, the underlying religious concerns lingered (Langness 1967:175-176).

The ban on warfare allowed some ordinary men to seize new opportunities, acting as interpreters for example, to earn wealth and prestige and perhaps to reinvest in traditional exchange (Reay 1964:248, Moses 1978:222). Big-men were quick to appreciate the value of new trade goods. Once they no longer had a monopoly on shell valuables, prudent big-men needed to consolidate their wealth and affirm their relative status by controlling their followers’ access to prestige and knowledge. They could see that it was beneficial to collaborate with white men, to preserve their access to land and participate in the drive for peace (Reay 1964:248). Big-men could either interpose themselves between their followers and the new administration (Strathern A. 1979b:533) or seek to align themselves with the missionaries.

Highlanders’ attitude to the arrival of white men and their spiritual and material power was thus pragmatic – it seemed astute to cooperate with rather than resist the wishes of white men. Their actions were coloured by both a desire for goods and an acknowledgment of the power of guns (Gordon 1983:209). Cruelty, fear and destruction were aspects of white control (Strathern A. 1977:137, Moses 1978:220, Connolly & Anderson 1987:263,267) and guns were used to great effect because they induced both fear and admiration (Leahy & Crain 1937: 143-144, Meggitt 1977:146-147, Brown P. 1982:534, Connolly & Anderson 1987:101-103, 263,268). In reality though, the force used was modest (Strathern A. 1974:244, 1992:233). 'After all, when you saw a twenty-year-old boy with perhaps five policemen keeping 30,000 warring tribesmen in happy harmony, you were just astounded and thought, How does he do it?' (Dame Rachel Cleland, quoted in Nelson 1993:33). Highlanders, misinterpreting the coercive power available to the few white men and over-estimating the rewards they could receive by forgoing

52 Nopnop, a Kuma man, was an example of a man who was not a traditional leader but who nevertheless realized the advantages of becoming an intermediary (Reay 1964:248). The interpreter occupied a powerful position as the kiaps’ confidant and the person who really taught them about patrolling (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:166). Others claimed that the interpreters controlled the kiaps and could be corrupt (Moses 1978:221-222, interviewing Engan, Mr Kipas Woskipe).

53 Konangil, a Kuma big-man was an example of a leader who saw the benefits of abandoning warfare (Reay 1964:248). Big-men who had recent successes in warfare were happy to accept the ban on further warfare because it consolidated their advantageous position.

54 People were shot and buried away from home. Others were sometimes kept in underground pits (Strathern A. 1977:137). Less violently, a kiap in the Chimbu valley in 1939 confiscated an entire pig herd to great effect. In Mount Hagen others destroyed bows and arrows (Connolly & Anderson 1987:267). Salisbury also reported the Siane weapons were burnt (1962:123).
fighting (cf. Ploeg 1979:162) were initially at least willing participants in the
process of encapsultion and pacification.

Pacification and the Administration

The conduct expected of administrators in relation to Highlanders and the
nature of Highland life was vastly different to that of 19th Century and early
20th Century insular Melanesia. Apart from banning warfare and cannibalism,
the administration sought to avoid excessive coercion and disruptive
reorganization of social and religious life (Lawrence & Meggitt 1965:3,
influenced by mistakes of the past and partly by the fact that their actions were
now accountable to the United Nations Trusteeship Council (Meggitt
to contain the excesses of missionary and commercial activity although they
too, by their very presence, were agents of social change.

The new colonial administration's attitude to pacification was as
pragmatic as the Highlanders. Locally stationed Australian administrative
officers, *kiaps*, were considered to be practical men of action, 'on the spot' to
communicate administrative wishes and to handle disputes and complaints
(Gordon 1983:209-210) with a view to averting physical violence and
arbitrating for peaceful settlements (Reay 1964:245). Constant patrols and the
settling of disputes brought the *kiaps* into close contact with the Highlanders,
the *kiap's* rest house in the area of each clan providing a meeting place and an
opportunity for people to assess the *kiap's* purpose, albeit that it was
communicated through interpreters (Moses 1978:221-222). Apart from
enforcing the ban on warfare, they proclaimed the strong ideological message
of freedom of movement and individual rights to which Highlanders were most
receptive (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:163). This could be demonstrated by the
rapidity in which Highlanders, men and women, began to travel, facilitating
exchange relationships and social encounters (Meggitt 1977:153).

Totally involved in their job, it was reported that the majority of *kiaps*
spent their time on patrol where they were both observant and flexible in their
responses (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:164-165). Among the Enga for example,
the *kiaps* turned their inability to abolish the *tee* exchange system to their
advantage, using it to identify the big-men (Gordon 1983:209). *Kiaps*
employed men of local influence, initially to fill positions of *bosbois* and later
those of *luluais* and *tultuls*<sup>55</sup>, to assist them in their tasks, to communicate with

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<sup>55</sup> *Bosbois* gathered people for census taking, health surveys and work projects (Strathern A. 1974:244). *Luluais*' tasks included the securing of local co-operation - the prevention of fighting, the reporting of disputes and the coercion of people to work on the construction of roads (Reay 1964:245-246, Strathern A. 1974:244). *Tultuls* were minor officials appointed to assist *luluais* and to act as messengers (Reay 1964:246, Strathern A. 1974:244). *Tultuls* also acted as interpreters (Salisbury 1962:124, Meggitt 1977:151).
the people, keep the peace and mobilize work gangs for the construction of roads (Reay 1964:245,247, Standish 1973:8, Meggitt 1977:150-151, Strathern A. 1977:138, Gordon 1983:209). Unlike coastal Melanesia, where long periods of contact with Europeans had eroded the position of traditional headmen (Reay 1964:245, citing Hogbin 1951), in the Highlands it was possible to identify the local leaders. Thus big-men were frequently able to occupy both new and traditional positions of influence and expand their customary roles in dispute settlement (Standish 1973:9). Some-times big-men would relinquish their administrative roles to lesser men who they could control from afar, although the astute could simultaneously fill the two roles (Meggitt 1977:150). Even where kiaps nominated men who had no broad base of local support, particularly in the eastern Highlands, these new men could usurp traditional powers and become like big-men themselves, or sometimes be manipulated by old warrior big-men from behind the scenes (Berndt R. 1971:414-415, Godelier 1982:33). The administrative strategy for peace consolidated the powers of local leaders, and thus implicitly supported the local values (Reay 1964:247). While the kiaps presided over the Court of Native Affairs, they encouraged the luluais and tululs to hear lesser disputes - problems with pigs and gardens, thefts and fighting, reluctant brides and adultery - in unofficial courts, modelled on the kiaps own courts but nevertheless employing processes of mediation much like the 'traditional' dispute settlement of big-men (Reay 1974:206-207). The system worked with some success, partly because the courts facilitated an increasing level of compensation payments and partly because luluais and tululs were perceived to have some of the coercive powers of kiaps at their disposal. Further there was still the possibility that interaction with traditional enemies could be avoided and trouble averted (Reay 1974:209).

In effect, many big-men and kiaps worked together to promote peace. Often kiaps seemed like big-men themselves (Salisbury 1962:123, Moses 1978:220) although they were 'impervious to reciprocal transactions with their ethos of equivalence' (Schiltz 1987:7) and therefore aloof from social interaction and the complications it could bring. They maintained their social distance and inscrutability with rituals of etiquette and the use of ceremonial practices which emphasized that they were friends to no one and thus impartial in their settlement of disputes. In the main their aims and actions were unambiguous and punishment was swift and direct, for there was little possibility of offenders pleading not guilty to a kiap who was both the arresting officer and the magistrate (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:172,175-180). Highlanders admired their perceived strength, including the use of violence that they used to achieve their ends (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:29). Their separateness, self-confidence and the awe with which they were held all contributed to the kiaps evident success (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:165) although in the main the kiaps' law appeared 'strong' and effective not because they were completely harsh and totalitarian but rather because of community compliance and cooperation (Gordon 1983:211).
The Administration and Economic Change

The administration sought pacification of the Highlands as a prerequisite for 'development' and political independence rather than as a belated response to plantation economies and other commercial demands as it was in insular Melanesia. Nevertheless the arrival of prospectors, miners, missionaries and the administrators themselves did have economic consequences in the Highlands that influenced the process of pacification. The initial effects of the influx of steel tools and shell wealth have been discussed above. The administration, missions and miners like the Leahy brothers all employed large numbers of workers and staff, paid their salaries with shell money and purchased their food with the same (Connolly & Anderson 1987:250-251). The supplying of food for government and mission stations and their participation in public works, like the construction of roads, introduced Highlanders to new forms of economic activity (Lacey 1982:361, Strathern A. 1992:232).

Such economic changes were, however, far less disruptive and exploitative than those experienced in the rest of Melanesia (Healey 1989:8). Expected to be in the indigenous, not expatriate interest (Clark 1988:42), the commercial enterprises permitted entry after initial pacification (Rodman 1979b:9) operated within a different world economy, one that resulted in less land alienation and dislocation of labour (Healey 1989:8). Until the disruptive effects of World War II for example, recruiters for coastal plantations were forbidden access to labour in areas above three thousand feet to protect the Highlanders from exposure to malaria (Connolly & Anderson 1987:170). Fearful of the unrest evolving in the coffee plantation economy in Kenya, the administration curbed the expatriate drive to establish more coffee plantations in the Highlands (Connolly & Anderson 1987:282). They also encouraged a 'dual economy' - the preservation of 'traditional' subsistence agriculture combined with small scale cash cropping (Healey 1989:8). As with other innovations, big-men and ordinary men were enthusiastic participants in the development of the new cash crops, the proceeds of which, in the western Highlands, passed back into traditional exchange networks (Lacey 1982:361-362). The consequences of this - the expansion of ceremonial exchange, the enhancement of traditional leadership and the contribution of the labour of women - are elaborated in Chapter 4.

The Missions and Material Change

During the pacification of insular Melanesia, the colonial governments and missions had generally operated with one accord. This was not the case in the Highlands. Relations between local administrators and missionaries were uneasy and sometimes their antagonism intense (Warry 1987:78) despite the fact that officially the missions, regardless of denomination, were permitted
entry to the country as useful adjuncts in the encouragement of peace and in
the dispensing of social services (McAuley 1955:144). Missionaries believed
that they, as much as the administrators, deserved credit for the pacification of
the Highlands. The Lutheran Pastor Vicedom, ministering near Mount Hagen,
accused the administration of using missionaries as extended arms of the law
to supplement the minimal numbers of *kiaps* and policeman (Connolly &
Anderson 1987:267). In turn the administrators suspected that missionaries
pretended to be official government representatives (Josephides 1985:74).
Certainly the *kiaps'* demands were reinforced by the missions (Berndt R.
interrelated aspects of war - pallisaded villages (in the east), the construction
of men's houses, the avoidance of women by men, initiation rites and men's
cults, war magic houses, weapons and magic materials - were all discouraged
by the missions to a greater or lesser degree (Read 1952b:229, 234, Reay
missionaries did have a pacifying effect, not necessarily because they
instituted cultural change but rather because they were white. To Highlanders
white men seemed much the same. Over time, they could discern their
differing status, but this was of little consequence given that all white men
appeared to share affluence and hence access to power (Strathern A. 1984:21-

Missions of different denominations carved out their areas of influence
and generally treated each other and the administration with suspicion and
dislike. They presented their doctrines in different ways, with varying
amounts of social dislocation and a greater or lesser degree of collusion with
Highlanders. In general the main denominations were more sympathetic to
local religions and customs and conversion, as a radical break with the past,
took a low profile (Barr 1983:109). Materially the missions had much to offer
and material transactions were emphasized by the missions, reinforcing the
Highland impression that access to cash and the benefits of modernization
were related to the observance of new Christian practices and taboos
(Strathern A. 1984:36-37,44, Warry 1987:79). Missions thus won converts
because of the offer immediate material rewards (Lawrence 1987:18). In some
areas they provided doctors, clinics, leprosariums and hospitals as well as
access to mission coffee plantations, cash marketing and cattle projects
(Strathern A. 1984:44-45). In Enga the missions were popular because they

56 The Gahuku-Gama also found it difficult to distinguish Read's position from that of the
administration or the mission. They imputed all white men a common purpose (Read 1965:151-
152).
57 The Highlanders attitude to the missions had much in common with their approach to the cargo
cults that flourished for a short time in the 1940's. In the Enga area, particularly cold weather and
diseases in humans and pigs, and the loss of material goods as white men withdrew during the war
contributed to the cargo cults. The decline in the availability of material goods seemed to have been
responsible for cargo cults right across the Highlands (Berndt 1952:56, Connolly & Anderson
provided hospitals and well-equipped schools with the prospect of good jobs and high incomes (Malone & Steffens 1970:173).

The expression of the material focus of the missions was often revealed in a general change of cultural patterns - of dress, hair cuts, sexual practices, residential arrangements and the like (McAuley 1955:141, Berndt C. 1958:42, Strathern A. 1984:36) and whether or not it was intended, Christianizing was equated with Europeanizing (Berndt C. 1958:42). Sometimes these changes would be urged by the missions, but often converts would seek them independently as a way of expressing a break with the past (McAuley 1955:142). Where missions discouraged or destroyed customs which were not contrary to the new criminal code, they earned the condemnation of the administration (Connolly & Anderson 1987:262) although occasionally their aims did overlap for entirely different reasons. At Pangia, in the Southern Highlands for example, both promoted the removal of the skull houses - the administration to avoid the health hazard of flies, the missions because they believed they represented devil worship (Strathern A. 1984:32).

The demands of the missions presented big-men with a dilemma. Some big-men cooperated with the missions, like Mokei Ninji, a Hagen big-man, whose friendship was cultivated by Father Ross. In return for the houses and churches that were built and the sick and injured that were treated, Ninji organized fifty boys to attend the first school (Connelly & Anderson 1987:255). Chimbu big-man, Kawagi, anticipating material benefits from their presence, was credited with actually inviting the mission to come to his area (Brown P. 1990:99). Other big-men, from the Chauve area, also assisted the missions. Koiboiri, having divorced his second wife in order to join the mission, teamed with Mama, campaigning against initiation, revealing the ancestral flutes to women and burning cult objects and weapons (Warry 1987:77-78). Kints, a young Gamagai warrior and potential big-man, having heard that missions represented peace, approached the Catholic mission to settle with his group and thus save him from the certain retaliation of his enemies (Dabrowski 1991:38,158). Big-men who co-operated with both the missions and the administration became doubly powerful. In the Southern Highlands, where contact came later and the vast number of missions produced confusion, power-broker big-men were able to play one mission off against another (Trompf 1991:157). Big-men in general though, found the adoption of Christian teachings problematic, particularly in relation to polygamy, as baptism was refused to those with more than one wife. There was little point in being wealthy for example, if the new wealth could not buy more wives to garden and to raise pigs. With only one wife a man could not expect to remain a big-man, much less become one (Brown P. 1972:75, Connolly & Anderson 1987:260). Successful big-men were thus likely to remain pagan, keeping all those things - wives, decorations and shells - that gave them prestige (Strathern A. 1984:44). Rubbish-men, having little to lose by leaving the traditional system, were more likely to agree to baptism as a way of elevating their status.
Again, pragmatic big-men could seek ways around these restrictions. Ninji, who attended Father Ross' church for thirty years, resisted baptism in favour of his six wives, sending them away just prior to his death-bed conversion\(^{58}\) (Connolly & Anderson 1987:261).

Big-men who remained aloof from the message of the missionaries kept traditional practices alive. Ongka, for example, retained his 'spirit men's house' (Strathem A. 1984:47) and Ongka and Ndamba returned to speaking aloud their sacrificial prayers to the ancestors at the pig kill. It is significant that these were Hagen big-men whose positions of leadership were enhanced by the process of pacification, and whose experience of the Christian Church was tempered by the less destructive approach of the missions in the Hagen area (Strathem A. 1984:49, 50).

The Missions and Ideological Change

Materially the missions did have a considerable impact on the lives of the Highlanders. Ideologically this was less so. Many people claimed to be Christians but merely used the missions for their own purposes (Nelson 1993:161) They selectively appropriated aspects of mission teaching so that change to their traditional religions was minimal (Lawrence & Meggitt 1965:4, Josephides 1985:79). Even in those areas where mission influence was intense, pagan practices and beliefs coexisted with the observance of Christian rituals seemingly without contradiction or conflict (Read 1952b:236). The missions made no real challenge to the belief in ancestral power - a supernatural force, by nature diffuse and illusive. In the Goroka Valley, where cult activity had declined or vanished with some rapidity and fertility rites were no longer performed, the ancestral nama flutes were not immediately destroyed (Read 1952b:236). The Lutheran missionaries though, believing the flutes to be the only concrete manifestation of the local religion concentrated on their destruction and supervised their burning in the presence of women (Read 1984:219-220). Nevertheless there were no major intellectual conflicts or logical inconsistencies between the Highlanders' conception of God, and their unformulated belief in supernatural power (Read 1952b:237). In Enga the Christian concept of God actually helped the Enga to define their own supernatural beliefs and they did little to separate Christian from non-Christian ideas, except perhaps to resist baptism so that could still participate in pig festivals (Freund et al 1970:147-148). Fundamentalist missions in fact encouraged a belief in indigenous spirit categories, using them as 'devils' or 'satans' against which the Christians had to fight (Strathem A. 1984:33, Warry 1987:80). Conversion therefore did not involve the rethinking of their

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\(^{58}\) The abandoning of polygamous unions could create social hardships - it could leave some women without means of support or community status and remaining wives with heavy domestic and gardening burdens (McAuley 1955:146). Some missions tolerated existing polygamous marriages but refused to endorse new ones (Dabrowski 1991:167).
conceptual world because their old beliefs were not taken to be factually incorrect, but rather morally wrong or dangerous (Strathern A. 1984:34).

Sometimes the missions made a conscious attempt to substitute Christian rituals and symbols for indigenous rites (Warry 1987:78). In the Chimbu area, Father Nilles for example, replaced *gerua* boards59 with crosses during the pig festivals and planted crosses to encourage the success of the gardens (Brown P. 1972:75, Warry 1987:78-79). Hymns were sung and prayers made prior to the slaughter of pigs at Pangia pig festivals although the fundamentalist Evangelical Bible Mission was opposed to traditional dress and decorations being used at these festivals (Strathern A. 1984:39). In Hagen though, the Catholics encouraged the wearing of traditional dress and the Lutherans employed decorated dancers at the times of baptism (Strathern A. 1984:46). Although some of the missions were antagonistic to the *moka* and *tee* (Strathern A. 1975:228, Gordon &Meggitt 1985:149), none discouraged exchange in general (Schiltz 1987:7). Indeed in both Pangia and Hagen, Christian baptisms contained an important exchange element and elaborate cooking and sharing of food was required and new exchange cycles emerged around the celebration of baptisms (Strathern A. 1984:102). Often the Highlanders themselves continued their old rituals beside the new. Where the fundamentalist missions provided determined opposition to pig festivals, in the Mid-Waghi for example, men substituted fowl or small marsupials for pigs and continued with their sacrifices. Non-Cristians and some Christians who were anxious about the deaths of close relatives, sacrificed the tongues of pigs to the ghosts, albeit surreptitiously (Reay 1988:3-4). In other areas where the pig festivals were ostensibly Christianized, the ancestors were still important. Ongka and Ndamba, mentioned above, recited their prayers to the ancestral ghosts aloud for all to hear. Even during those years where they apparently obeyed the Christian teaching and substituted Christian prayers, it was implicit that the essence of the sacrifice was still communicated to the ancestors (Strathern A. 1984:49). Likewise the Kyaka Enga when killing pigs continued to dedicate prayers to the ghosts at least in their thoughts (Bulmer 1965:158).

The abandoning of cults or the destruction of cult objects may have removed their physical presence but as long as there was someone to remember, the knowledge was not necessarily lost. In 1961 the Catholic mission took the Minj (Kuma) by surprise and 'exorcized' their war-magic houses, burnt weapons and perishable cult objects and confiscated their war-magic stones (Reay 1971:179). That their enemies retained their magic caused anxiety, particularly when in 1965 the Swiss Evangelical Brotherhood was attempting to remove the remaining war-magic houses. The Minj finally agreed to allow the mission to destroy the war-magic houses, partly because it released them from obeying arduous food-sharing taboos and partly because they were reassured by rumours that the best weapons and most potent magical

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59 In the late 1930's *gerua* boards had been collected at the mission and burnt (Warry 1987:78).
materials had been preserved (Reay 1971:179-180). The fate of war-magic houses in the adjacent Chimbu area was not so clear cut. In 1959, Father Aufenanger recorded the demise of the role of the war magician, his magic house, his ritual knowledge and all his ritual materials (1959:1-2), a report that seemed to be correct given that Paula Brown's extensive later work on the Chimbu did not mention them (Hughes J. 1989: 95). Nevertheless she did suggest that even if the old practices were suppressed and people reluctant to perform them publicly, the beliefs could still exist (Brown P. 1972:75). Hughes's subsequent interviews with two old war magicians demonstrated the continuity of ritual knowledge and the ability to adjust and improvise to meet the demands of new clan fighting (1989:100-104).

Pacification in effect did not produce a radical break with the past. Open warfare may have ceased but hostilites in the Highlands were not limited to violence of the physical kind. Beliefs in the violence of sorcery continued because Christianity had not discounted it. Illness and unexpected death, or in some cases all deaths, still needed to be accounted for. 'Before .. men were killed by enemies in battle. The arrow killed them and this could be seen. But now men die, not by the arrows of their enemies, for we do not fight. The way of death cannot be seen, for the sorcerer does not show himself to our eyes'. This was the fear expressed by a Church leader among the Gahuku (Read 1952b:237). Sorcery beliefs such as this not only continued but intensified across the Highlands (Berndt R. 1962:247, Meggitt 1981:28, Reay 1982:628, Gordon & Meggitt 1985:155, Sillitoe 1987:123, Cooke et al 1992:828, Strathern A. 1992:248) to remain a significant element in contemporary warfare, discussed again in Chapter 4.

Continuity in the Highlands

That the Highlands seemed to be pacified was a reflection of pragmatic self-interest on the part of the Highlanders. The administrative induced period of peace - itself a manifestation of Highland cooperation rather than of powerful third-party intervention - facilitated a period of great material gain. In some areas of the Highlands this material gain did not disrupt, but rather enhanced, elements of traditional life and missionaries contributed to this material gain without ideologically replacing the old ways.

Like insular Melanesia, pacification - or more accurately, the temporary cessation of warfare - was achieved in the Highlands through a combination of administrative, religious and economic influences and the participation of the indigenous people. Yet the geographical, political and historical circumstances of white contact in the Highlands produced a different result in the longer term. Apart from the banning of warfare, the colonial administration had attempted minimal change in the Highlands to ensure that social and cultural life was not drastically disrupted. If parallels are drawn with insular Melanesia, it could be suggested that this was not the way to achieve a lasting
'peace'. In the western Highlands in particular the power of big-men had been consolidated, the traditional economy and exchange relations enhanced and the underpinnings of religious life left intact. This is in contrast to many of the changes that occurred in the eastern Highlands and the significance of this is enlarged in Chapter 4. In insular Melanesia the indigenous way of life had been destroyed principally by prolonged exposure to the commercial and spiritual interests of encapsulating powers and the later involvement of colonial administrators who acted to protect the interests of their countrymen. In contrast, Highland administrators had the power and the will to limit the excesses of mission and commercial activity. Meanwhile their own performance was monitored by the United Nations and influenced by current political thinking in Australia and the world at large.

Once the Highlands were considered to be pacified, the colonial administration actively began to promote political, social and economic 'development' - the construction of roads and airstrips, the encouragement Highlanders to grow coffee and vegetable gardens and the establishment of plantations - with a view to promoting the foundations for independence (Meggitt 1977:147, Rodman 1979b:9, Strathern A. 1992:232). This gradualist agenda for development in the Highlands and the eventual independence of Papua New Guinea was radically accelerated by the demands of world opinion and its antipathy to colonial rule (A.B.C. Television, 7th November, 1993). Khrushchev, addressing the United Nations in 1960, had attacked Australia's presence in Papua New Guinea. In 1962, the United Nation's Foote Mission gave a poor report, suggesting that the development was too little and too slow and the education system inadequate for the creation of an indigenous elite to take charge of the country. While Highland leaders concurred with the plans for faster development and improved education, they did not push for self-government, much less for independence60. At public meetings, Highlanders in their thousands argued that they wanted the Australian administration to remain until development on a much larger scale had occurred. They shrewdly assessed that coastal people with better educations would take the positions of power (Nelson 1993:214). Gradually though, with the graduation of the first university students, the growth of a small elite and the development of a political party independence became a more popular cause (Connolly & Anderson 1987:292-295).

Others considered however that independence was premature. Many, like the Kuma, believed that independence should have been delayed until their grandsons were grown men - until no one who had known a slain warrior was alive to avenge his death or be driven by the ancestral ghosts (Reay 1987a:115). Similar fears were expressed by the Enga (Kopyoto 1978:203, Gordon & Meggitt 1985:152). When international pressure was being brought

60 Certain Trusteeship Councillors, particularly the Liberian representative, found it an anathema that a people could favour a continuation of colonial rule (Connolly & Anderson 1987:293).
to bear on the Australian administration to hasten independence, the pacification process had occupied just twenty five years (Rodman 1979b:9). Highlanders, for better or worse, had thus been spared long years of colonial contact. Whether pacification had really occurred was another matter.
CHAPTER 4: THE FRAGILITY OF PEACE

The Seeds of Disorder

Within the process of pacification itself lay potential problems to disrupt the newly created order. Some of these were introduced pressures - cash crops and economic change, roads and expanded communications, alcohol, vehicles and accidents and new and more complex systems of administration. Other seeds of disorder came less from the uncertainties of contemporary life and more from the continuity and consolidation of aspects of 'traditional' life - the leadership of big-men, relationships between men and women, transactions in reciprocal exchange and in effect the continuity of religious life. That these unbroken traditions were instrumental in the return of Highland fighting can be illustrated by a comparison of the course of pacification in the east and west of the Highlands.

Many have observed that general disorder and contemporary fighting is far more prevalent in the west than in the east (Standish 1973:4, Strathern A. 1977:143-144, 1984:23, 1992:232, Gordon & Meggitt 1985:7-8, Brown P. 1986:165, Brown & Schuster 1986:158, Feil 1987:64 (note), Hughes J. 1989:94, Knaufft 1990:236). Perusal of the pages of the Post-Courier indicates that this position appears to have continued into the 1990's. During 1991 for example, twenty-one violent incidents were reported in the Western Highlands Province and seven large tribal fights occurred - two in the Southern Highlands Provence, five in Enga and one ongoing fight in the Chimbu Provence that extended for over a year. In contrast in the Eastern Highlands, one payback murder was reported in Goroka (Post-Courier 1991)61. It is of interest to speculate as to why there is a discrepancy between the levels of violence in the east and west of the Highlands.

Pacification in the Eastern Highlands

It appears somewhat paradoxical that the eastern Highlands remains in relative peace because the early ethnographers reported the unremitting and unconstrained nature of warfare in the east, where warriors were ever-watchful, where all boys had to be converted by initiation and cult activity into warriors and where the leaders of highest renown, admired for their violence and aggression, were skilled in strategy, weapons and warfare in general (Read 1952a, Berndt R. 1952, 1962, Langness 1964). It should be remembered however that 'traditional' life may have already changed. For example, the escalating warfare among the Siane provoked by sorcery allegations, had its origins in an epidemic of dysentery introduced from outside contact (see

61 Of course the pages of the Post-Courier do not necessarily provide reliable statistics, and the reading of the newspapers may not have been error free. However these figures do give an overall impression of differences in the level of violence between the east and the west.
footnote 50). Even the earliest ethnographers had to verify their data by a consensus of what happened in living memory (Berndt R. 1954:191). The degree of aggression and belligerence detected depended on the ethnographic present of the observers. Nevertheless social and religious life in the eastern Highlands revolved around the exigencies of warfare, or from another perspective, religious imperatives made warfare indispensable for the continuity of life.

The arrival of white administrators and missionaries and their focus on the banning of warfare and related cult activities struck at the core of eastern Highland life. The decline of initiation rites, cult and other activities related to the maintenance of warfaring units has been referred to above (Chapter 3). Likewise, the status of the warrior big-man declined. Like those on the islands of Malaita and New Georgia, warrior big-men lost their positions of power as warfaring skills were no longer criteria for leadership. *Kiaps* were unlikely to identify overt warrior big-men as suitable candidates to assume the positions of *luluais* so it was possible for lesser men to obtain positions of authority and sometimes be manipulated from behind the scenes (Berndt R. 1971:414). This is not to argue that all big-men faded from public life. Many had achieved their position of leadership with attributes other than skills in warfare, particularly by the amassing of wealth and its subsequent distribution in exchange. As Read noted for the Gahuku (1965:77) - they were 'materialists, concerned to the point of exhaustion with the acquisition of wealth and its distribution in a never-ending series of competitive exchanges'. The scale and complexity of transactions in exchange may have been markedly larger in the western Highlands, but the managerial skills of big-men in the east continued to place them in a favourable position to maintain their fields of influence. Big-men and men in general had seen much of their traditional life disintegrate but as scope for action in the cults and warfare faded, entrepreneurial opportunities began to flourish (Howlett 1973:259).

The population of the eastern Highlands had experienced more direct and continuous contact with outsiders than that of other areas. Although the advent of the Second World War curtailed overall access to the Highlands, activity intensified at the war-time bases of which three out of four were in the eastern Highlands. This was particularly so at Goroka where the people were exposed to about twelve hundred members of the allied fighting force as well as Australian army engineers and over a thousand Highland labourers who contributed to the building of a larger airstrip. Chimbus supplied the labour for the heavy construction work, in part because of their reputation for hard work, but more significantly because the local population was already fully engaged in the production of food for the base (Finney 1973:27). Remunerated with shells and salt, and with a steady access to trade goods in general, eastern Highlanders were thus ideally placed to benefit from the gradual introduction of cash and cash crops.
For administrative and geographic reasons those areas reached first by white men - the eastern Highlands (and the Wahgi Valley) - developed as centres for expatriate coffee plantations and commerce (Brown P. 1978:244). In 1937 the administration had planted experimental arabica coffee at Aiyura east of Goroka (Finney 1973:42), and its success opened the way for its development in the Highlands. Recognizing its potential, the administration relaxed its policy on land alienation and investors poured in. Between 1952 and 1954 land alienation in the eastern Highlands was intense (Finney 1973:45) until general criticism in Australia of the negative aspects of expanding colonialism and specific fears of the creation a terrorist situation like that of the Mau Mau in Kenya resulted in a revision of land policies and a more reasoned approach to land alienation (Finney 1973:45-47). Despite the land rush, development was scattered throughout the area and vast contiguous tracts of land were not converted into plantations (Howlett 1973:258). In marked contrast to the densely populated Chimbu and Enga Provinces, where plantation development was not permitted at all (Brown P. 1978:104), the eastern Highlands did experience considerable economic and social change.

Coffee, requiring little capital outlay, was an ideal crop for expatriates and indigenous people alike, and the eastern Highlands was an excellent location to grow it - partly because of the existence of adequate transport facilities and partly because of its geographic features which included a desirable climate and suitable large areas for coffee plantations. Relatively lower population densities and extensive unused land between settlements offered ideal developmental sites (Brown P. 1978:104,140). For strategic reasons, people and their gardens had been concentrated in permanent villages on the hills and ridges leaving the grassland valley floor, superficially 'no-man's land', unoccupied and uncultivated. Potential coffee planters negotiated for this land with the landholding groups, initially unofficially and later under administrative supervision (Finney 1973:46-47). Expatriate owned plantations and smallholder indigenous coffee producers developed symbiotic relationships, establishing 'partnerships' as they began planting their coffee trees and supposedly sharing expertise and land respectively (Finney 1973:49, Howlett 1973:257, Lacey 1982:363). Highlanders were enthusiastic participants, encouraging expatriates to settle in their midst, hoping to share in the white man's wealth and prosperity, and astutely dispersing them onto the disputed and previously unusable land between hostile groups (Finney 1973:50-51). Highlanders, in this case eastern Highlanders, therefore took an active and aggressive entrepreneurial approach, raising wealth from land that they could not personally exploit and joining the cash economy with the growing of coffee. In the latter, they were encouraged by the then government policy that promoted enterprise by issuing seedlings and providing advice (Finney 1973:60-64)\(^62\). Thus from the early 1950's eastern Highlanders had

\(^62\) In the early 1960's this encouragement was banned because of restrictions imposed by the International Coffee Agreement Organization (Finney 1973:66).
embraced the growing of coffee and men and women had become preoccupied with business (Strathern A. 1984:23).

The concept of bisnis encompasses models of Highland life both modern and traditional. Innovative and receptive to change, the eastern Highlanders accept the opportunities offered by coffee and other cash crops and exploit circumstances to the full. Spending unexpectedly small amounts of their profits on imported and other consumer goods (Finney 1973:71), they collectively reinvest in bisnis, earning the description 'conspicuous investors' (Finney 1973:81). Pooling their wealth to get adequate capital to invest, they thus use traditional methods of amassing valuables to meet modern objectives (Finney 1973:76). And overseeing all these transactions and acting in the name of their groups are the entrepreneurial big-men who are able to enlist the support of others because collectively members can acquire the convenience of services - transport, trade-stores and the like - as well as profit and prestige. Like traditional big-men in the past, these modern leaders, skilful in manipulating wealth, are one and the same as those occupying positions of political power. Reviewing the careers of ten prominent Goroka business men, only two of whom had been former luluais and another who had exploited the labour of up to ten wives, Finney (1973: Chapter 5) demonstrates how these men have transposed modern skills obtained from some Western education, work experience and market opportunities into action located in traditional big-man models. Modern big-men tread a fine line between the balancing of communal and individual interests. Like big-men before them they cannot afford to be too despotic nor careless of the wishes of those who have made financial contributions. Neither can they be prominent and self-interested to the point of attracting jealousy and sorcery (Finney 1973:113-115). This is how Finney assessed the situation of big-men in 1973. In the intervening years however M. Strathern (1988:83) has noted of the eastern Highlands that communal enterprises seem to be more individualistic and big-men are beginning to have all the appearances of a social elite.

Bisnis seems to have become a surrogate for transactions in competitive exchange - of wealth or warfare. A focus on the management and increase of resources, particularly the reinvestment of profits, appears to address the concerns of earlier men, big and ordinary. Their anxiety about strength, masculinity, renewal and fertility can be appeased by successful business transactions and the control and management of new resources. Coffee and cash and new commercial opportunities have done much to fill gaps left by the diminution of traditional life. If this is so, economic initiatives, as much as the teachings of the missions, have been instrumental in changing the religious imagination of Highlanders in the east and thus has contributed to the maintenance of peace.

Finney (1973, Chapter 4), gives many examples of this from the purchase of work vehicles, trucking businesses, restaurants, trade stores and the like.
Mission activity, like that of commercial development, has been unevenly dispersed across the Highlands. By the early 1970's 'the eastern Highlands had all the appearances of being the most missionized province on earth - over eighty Christian denominations and sects of one sort or other being represented there' (Trompf 1991:157). Inevitably, such a concentration of mission activity has influenced the religious imagination of Highlanders in the east. Rites of initiation and male cults declined or disappeared possibly because the solidarity of male warfaring units was no longer a social necessity. Certainly the activities and teachings of the missions made them less of a religious imperative as well. People close to mission influence, like some Gahuku-Gama, changed their perceptions quickly despite an underlying belief in the endurance of ancestral power (Read 1952b). By 1951 converts were being prepared for baptism, their hair cut, second or more wives divorced and magico-religious practices discarded. No new men's houses were being constructed, initiation rituals were curtailed and the fertility ritual of nama ge'isa no longer performed. People now relied on the power of God to replace garden magic, to bring the rain, ensure the fertility of the soil and the growth of crops and promote general well-being (Read 1952b:234-235). The missionaries had focused on the removal of the nama flutes having perceived correctly how they provided symbols of unity for groups of men. During the fertility rite the flutes had mediated between men and their ancestors (Read 1952b:238). Those outside the then orbit of the missions were fearful of the consequences for themselves and others after the loss of the nama flutes, the relaxing of vigilance against the danger of women and the failure to safeguard other religious necessities (Read 1984:220). For those under intense mission influence however, the destruction of the flutes did much to alter the foundations of the indigenous religion.

In many cases the discarding of old ways was not necessarily a burden. For example, in the eastern Highlands where pig raising was comparatively insignificant and ordinary men in particular did not need additional wives to garden and keep pigs, polygamous marriages were in a minority (as it was in fact in many areas) and thus problematic for relatively few converts (Read 1952b:234). For many people conversion to Christianity was liberating. Men were discharged from the arduous rites thought necessary to develop and maintain masculinity and strength - violent and painful rites of initiation64 and continuing cult activity where constant surveillance, harsh criticism and self discipline remained life-long commitments (Read 1984:221,227,228,231,236, 238). The missions had challenged and successfully changed much that men believed in (Berndt R. 1962:423) and Gahuku-Gama, Bena-Bena and other

64 Leaves like sandpaper were rolled and thrust in and out of their nostrils until the blood flowed freely. Canes were swallowed to induce vomiting (Langness 1977:7). Men acknowledged that the forced introduction of cane swallowing to boys was dangerous and could result in death (Read 1984:246). Men continued to administer these treatments to themselves throughout their lives to preserve their masculinity and vitality (Read 1984:228-229).
Men in the eastern Highlands did not regret the abandoning of the violent rites (Langness 1977:7). Once they did not have to strive against their suspected biological inferiority, men did not have to fear the polluting power of women. They were spared the onerous tasks of caring for themselves while women were secluded (Langness 1967:172) and interpersonal relations between men and women became freer and easier (Strathern M. 1988:82-83). Simultaneously the new business enterprises emerged to capture the attention and imagination of both men and women.

Men in the eastern Highlands may have been deprived of the cults as a means of creating masculine identity and the domination of women, but using the avenue of modern business enterprises they have sustained a distinctive domain for themselves (Strathern M. 1988:82-83). While the collectivity of the life of men has possibly declined, the opposite has occurred with women. Arguing from the work of Sexton (1982), M. Strathern maintains that women have taken up the ritual slack and created new rituals of regeneration to replace those discarded by men (although as suggested above, men's enthusiasm for reinvestment may continue to reflect ritual concerns). In the Goroka District of the Eastern Highlands Province (and the Chauve District of Chimbu Province), groups of women meet regularly to save money earned from selling vegetables, coffee and sometimes their labour. Using these savings, women interact in regional networks that engage in two types of transactions - one which imitates exchanges used in traditional marriage payments, the other modelled on Western banking practices whereby small loans are made by the members of many groups to each other (Sexton 1982:167). These women's groups, termed Wok Meri (Tok Pisin for 'women's work'), meet at night to enhance their ritual content and to conform with the tradition of important occasions - initiation, menarche rites, betrothal, courting parties and the like - which are or were nocturnal events (Sexton 1982:174-175). The impetus for the creation of Wok Meri was the perception by women that they have an increasing lack of control over the wealth that they help to create. Men, as trustees over land and individual owners of trees, are able to use this precedence in claiming ownership of coffee trees and their produce. Although women contribute to the production of coffee, their rights to the crop are informal. The money they earn from their vegetable crops and from selling coffee cherry is much less than that easily available to men, which women believe men squander on beer and card playing65 (Sexton 1982:167-169). In Wok Meri women thus attempt to raise their economic status and reaffirm their own importance and capabilities (Sexton 1982:197). Women confirm in fact that they are the promoters of growth. While some men in the eastern

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65 To a certain extent this seems to contradict Finney's view (1973) that men spend relatively little on consumer goods. Certainly in 1976 a church spokesman was maintaining that 'beer is the biggest item of business in Goroka now' (Amarshi et al 1978:256, note 15). Chauve women also claim that men waste money on gambling and drinking. But women gamble and buy cigarettes with their cash as well as men. It is likely that their criticism of men is a rationale for their own savings and a comment on their inability to control coffee incomes (Warry 1987:150).
Highlands are suspicious of *Wok Meri* and interpret it as a secret women's cult like their now defunct male cults, those who are familiar with its stated goals are more accepting and actively helpful (Sexton 1982:195-196).

The administration's ban on warfare, the mission's discouragement of cult activity and the new opportunities offered by commercial development - that introduced both cash and a new view of the world - have provided a firmer basis for eastern Highlanders to give up their warfaring ways. Young men saw new futures for themselves, asserting their masculinity in new enterprises, not just living their lives as perpetual warriors (Read 1984:218). With warfaring groups disbanded and warrior big-man's powers diminished or non-existent, with flutes no longer in existence to symbolize group unity, with refugees frozen away from home and buffer-zones of plantations grown between hostile groups, many avenues for interaction between potentially warfaring groups are no longer open. The possibility that warfaring groups can redefine themselves has become less likely. Meanwhile women reaffirm the rituals of marriage and bridewealth and also create new networks of relationships. "They symbolically shoulder the burden of insuring the "fertility" or the reproduction of money, which has become a requisite (as a major component of bride-wealth) for the reproduction of society" (Sexton 1982:197).

Pacification in the eastern Highlands thus seems to have had more in common with that of insular Melanesia. The combined onslaught of administrative, mission and commercial activity did institute real social and cultural change. The time span since 'pacification' though is relatively short and the tradition of fighting may have remained alive to be ignited by revenge or sorcery, old disputes or new pressures (cf. Strathern A. 1984:24). It is worth noting that apart from Read's review of his interpretation of the *nama* cult (1984), the early dense ethnographic descriptions of the eastern Highlands (Read, R. Berndt and Langness) have not been replicated or reviewed in the light of cultural change. A new study at a different time and with a different perspective, like that of J. Hughes and the Chimbu war magicians (1989), might well render another view. Nevertheless, compared with the western Highlands, where reciprocal exchange has expanded and the leadership of big-men continues to define potential warfaring groups, the break with the past is remarkable.

**Continuity in the Western Highlands - the Leadership of Big-Men**

Big-men in the western Highlands were as astute and innovative as those of the east. Their fortunes also flourished, partly through the introduction of new opportunities and partly through the promotion of aspects of 'traditional' life, in particular their participation in ceremonial exchange. It was easy for administrators to identify and recognize the leadership role of big-men. They were prominent in every way and their skills in oratory and manipulation of wealth in exchange made them recognizably so. In the eyes of the
administration their ability to control their followers and apparently initiate peaceful relations with the exchange of gifts gave the impression that big-men were useful agents of social control. It was not immediately obvious that exchange was fiercely competitive and linked to exchanges in blows as well as gifts and that these big-men were as capable of engaging in warfare as those who were conspicuous warriors. Cooperative big-men seemed ideal candidates to become government luluais and to assist in pacification. The administration itself therefore provided the opportunity for some big-men to maintain and expand their fields of influence.

The first inflationary waves of pearl shell and other introduced valuables permitted a widening of the economic bases of old and potential big-men. This was particularly true close to distribution points in areas like Hagen (Feil 1982:302). Ambitious ordinary men with unexpected access to new wealth were able to vie for the position of big-man, ceremonies were staged more frequently and competition was exacerbated (Strathern A. 1984:23). While a big-man's reputation rested on his interest, energy and participation in public affairs - courage in warfare and his rhetorical and managerial skills in production and exchange - he was also a man of intelligence with sound judgement and knowledge of history, traditions and relationships (Brown P. 1979:103). Possessing such intelligence and skills, big-men were equally adept at responding to new developments and challenges. New products and the emerging cash economy were easily embraced. The supplying of food to prospectors’ camps and government and mission stations had introduced Highlanders to smallholder production and marketing, first for shells, steel tools and new strains of pigs and later cash in payment for timber, food and new cash crops like coffee and sometimes tea and cattle, and in Enga, pyrethrum (Meggitt 1971b:201, Feil 1982:301, Lacey 1982:362, Connolly & Anderson 1987:250-251). All men and women recognized the advantages of the economic opportunities but big-men were better placed to engage quickly in commercial enterprises (Meggitt 1974:192). The acquisition of cash has given big-men the added chance to expand the power base that had been confirmed by the colonial administration and consolidated by the original influx of valuables. The way that big-men and other Highlanders accessed the new cash wealth and the uses to which they put it is enlarged below.

The fact that big-men consolidated their traditional basis of economic and political control does not mean that leadership has remained purely in the hands of older-style big men or that these old big-men and their younger successors are unresponsive to change. It has already been described how many big-men became government appointed luluais. With the introduction of Local Government Councils66, these and younger big-men, their influence enhanced with new wealth, were well placed to be elected (Meggitt 1974:192, 56

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66 The dates for this vary according to the area. For example in the Chimbu area these began in 1959, Hagen 1960 and Enga 1963.
Strathern A. 1975:228, Brown P. 1979:107). In the Dei Council in 1964 for example, of the forty new councillors elected, twenty one were big-men and a further six were the sons of big men. In total twenty seven members, not necessarily those counted above, had previously been bosbois, luluais or tultuls (Strathern A. 1970c:554). Some less progressive older men though were content to be prominent only in exchange (Strathern A. 1970c:555, Brown P. 1979:107). Not all prominent men are big-men in the 'traditional' sense. Some have achieved influence through aligning with the missions67, others by entering national politics or through success in the commercial world. However there is a great deal of overlap. Politicians for example mobilize people politically by utilizing clan rivalries and loyalties (Standish 1982:393) and as the film Onkga's Big Moka (1974), shows, leaders now compete on a large scale and incorporate regional politics and national elections (cf. Knauff 1990:276). Ongka, a prominent elderly Hagen big-man, has now chosen to devote himself to ceremonial exchange, allowing his young successor who is a Local Government Councillor to deal with wider government concerns (Strathern A. 1992:240)68. Nevertheless when Ongka mobilized his now famous big moka his corresponding big-man, Mr Parua-Kuri, was a prominent national politician who achieved his position through traditional channels69 and who was still obliged to honour his exchange responsibilities. His long-standing parliamentary success owed less to his party membership and performance and more to his existing exchange ties in moka and the mastery in rhetoric that goes with it (Strathern A. 1984:103-104). Men of influence, whether they be big-men at a local level or in the wider field of provincial or national politics, operate within the same frame of reference which includes webs of obligations and interpersonal relationships where the giving of wealth remains a way of obtaining prestige in itself.

The pervasiveness of the big-man ideology can be demonstrated by the use of imagery that links traditional values to those of future needs. In late 1977, a Hagen Councillor, attempting to explain the significance and operation of the anticipated new provincial government, did so in the language of exchange and the qualities of big-men. He called for candidates who needed skills like those of big-man - the responsibility to divide pork well (that is to allocate resources with accuracy and generosity), to climb trees and pollard them for gardens (to take resources, at some risk, and make good use of them),

67 Mama, a big-man from the Chauve District of Chimbu Province, sought early baptism because he believed the mission was the most powerful force in the area. He attributes much of his success to his early baptism which allowed him to take part in mission affairs and gain the allegiance of converts (Warry 1987:78).

68 However Ongka had previously been a councillor for a number of years (Strathern A. 1984:57).

69 His mother came from the largest Kawelka clan and his father was an outstanding Tipuka big-man (Strathern A. 1979b:537). Parua-Kuri has utilized his father's network of alliances and maintained the exchanges to support these, as well as engaging in a wide range of business and political activities and keeping his position as a Local Government Councillor after he had become an MP (Strathern A. 1984:149-150). He lost his seat in parliament in 1987 having been unsuccessful in mobilizing electoral support to include the enemies of his chief allies (Strathern A. 1992:238).
to swim rivers (accept physical danger and engage in challenging work) - for the new members of the provincial government would need to be like the big-man who cuts the pig (divides up the resources offered by the national government). Further, it was stressed that this was a local matter, Tok Pisin was unnecessary because it was local knowledge and experience that was essential (Strathern A. 1984:153-155). This speech carried all the themes reported in Chauve campaign rhetoric where again the most common metaphor was the image of cutting and distributing pork (Warry 1987:275). The ideal that no man butchers and eats his own pig symbolizes the meeting of group obligations and a concern of the welfare of others by rearing pigs and sharing the pork, the success of which confirms the right to speak for others and to assume political authority.

Potential leadership is a somewhat uneasy combination of both the old and the new as can be deduced from the careers of younger men. Some Hagen young men, usually those with no effective big-men to unite them, show a preference for doing business simply for themselves (Strathern A. 1982a:151) while others with the capacity to acquire pigs choose to elevate their status by initiating exchange (Strathern A. 1974:247). Educated young men, looking to gain power through provincial and national politics, find that education alone does not allow them to bypass the arduous exchange responsibilities required for successful big-manship. Thus they attempt bribery and corruption to imitate the idiom of exchange (Strathern A. 1984:54). Gamagai young men suspect that engaging in moka is not a sensible economic proposition and the amount pigs bring in butcher shops seems to confirm this. They continue to engage in moka though for the special relationships it brings - secure places to stay when away from home, the chance to meet marriageable women, the opportunity to gather information and to share a special understanding, particularly the ability to interpret figurative speech (Dabrowski 1991:133-134). Young Engan men who were initially excited with new business opportunities and dismissive of the tee70 (Meggitt 1974:182), have come to realize that non-participation in exchange could 'relegate them to the political periphery of their community' (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:156). This is equally true of those Chauve men who engage purely in Western-style business. Despite economic success they remain politically inferior (Warry 1987:99). Those with political ambitions, recognizing the centrality of exchange, sponsor exchange ceremonies during elections or engage in the outright purchasing of votes with wealth (Warry 1987:283). In general in the Chimbu area economically progressive young men elected to the Councils cannot maintain their positions unless they also possess organizational and rhetorical skills like those of big-men (Brown P. 1972:97). As young educated Chimbu return home, their lack of awareness and knowledge of local matters is belittled despite their acknowledged proficiency in the modern world. They realize that

70 One young Engan man while speaking disparagingly of old men and their participation in the tee nevertheless continued to engage in a wide range of exchange transactions (Meggitt 1974:182).
they have to attach themselves to their fathers' exchange partnerships to gain local recognition and a chance to be influential in their own right (Standish 1982:392-393).

The achievement of a successful man's individual goals depends upon the establishment of sets of relationships and reciprocal obligations, whether he is operating locally, provincially, nationally or across these fields of influence. Regardless of the avenues taken by a big-man in his rise to power he needs to be mindful of both concealing his self interest and accentuating the solidarity and collective interests of the group he represents (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:157). Entrepreneurial big-men have to counter potential jealousy and the suspicion that they promote their own interests and fail to share their wealth (Warry 1987:140). They need to make persuasive use of action and rhetoric to convince the members of their groups that their interests are shared and complementary. People are then willing to participate in the exchange transactions that place resources under the management of such men, including their electoral support where relevant. People take pride in the prestige of their big man because their reputations rest on his success (Brown P. 1979:103). Thus like the eastern Highlanders in the 1970's, Engans, Hageners, Wahgi and Chimbus, under the auspices of their big-men, combine in communal enterprises, investing in trade stores and trucks, vegetable and coffee production on clan land, marketing and the like because it is both convenient and prestigious to do so (Lacey 1982:361, Merlan & Rumsey 1991:27-28, O'Hanlon 1989:14, Brown P. 1979:103-104, ). These shared transactions - which have their origins in exchange relationships - link individual men together in well-defined groups and in effect create the groups. As it has been argued above, the transactions in exchange that define the groups can encompass a wide range of interaction from violent to 'peaceful'. Given that big-men appear to have remained pivotal in sustaining groups it would seem likely that they have a part to play in the resumption of war if only in that they integrate supporters into competitive and potentially warfaring groups.

Big-men's contribution to contemporary warfare though, goes beyond the simple holding of groups together. Although Feil (1987:114) argues that big-men increase stability and promote social control through exchange and wealth transactions and big-men in the past have been influential in securing peace-terms in times of war (Strathern M. 1972:9), others claim that they mastermind fighting for their own purposes. Standish (1973:20-21) suggests that old Chimbu big-men, attempting a comeback, utilize the frustration of their followers over modern development (or lack of it). Thus they are 'taking the traditional provocateur's role' (Standish 1973:20), pouring scorn on young men who are neglectful of their heritage, reinforcing their groups' sense of identity, capitalizing on the art of the provocative insult and urging them to defend their integrity. In the Hagen-Nebilyer area, big-men employ 'fight talk' at some exchange events, in particular on the occasions of warfare and homicide.
compensation and *moka* (and *makayl*) ceremonial exchange, as well as behind the battle lines (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:98). This oratorical style validates the speaker's authority to claim the attention of his male audience while the linguistic structure of his message makes it clear that his speech refers to group values, not individual concerns (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:99-100). In Hagen, the content of ceremonial speeches that explicitly blends the past and the present has always 'preserved' the concept of warfare (Strathern A. 1984:99). And old leaders get the opportunity to back up their words with action. Wahgi big-men for example, who in the past had controlled young men's access to weapons, once again are able to assert their authority by teaching them the art of making weapons and the skills to use them (Reay 1982:632). Their repository of knowledge goes beyond the martial arts to include tactics and ritual knowledge - the history of past wars and the rituals of revenge. That big-men in turn may value the young men's skills with modern weapons is discussed below. Hagen leader Ongka, presented with a modern conflict tried first to mediate. When unsuccessful he acted decisively urging his group to warfare, planning strategies and giving encouragement to the men who went to fight (Strathern A. 1992:241). And mediation itself may contain violent undertones. In 1980 local Chauve big-men averted unconstrained warfare that *kiaps* and politicians had been unable to contain, by threatening to join the opposing clans in battle (Warry 1987:97 note 1). Such is the time span of 'peace' in the western Highlands that old-style big-men remain alive and influential as consolidators of group identity and as disseminators of knowledge. Indeed P. Brown, returning to the Chimbu area after an absence of some years was surprised at the survival of the leaders - the continuity in the style of their leadership as well as the value placed on their knowledge of tradition and procedures in exchange (Brown P. 1979:107).

In the western Highlands the leadership of big-men contains elements both innovative and conservative. Another Hagen big-man, Ndamba, continues to practise *moka* partly in order to exercise control over events, and this includes the amalgamation of money into *moka*, and partly 'as the expression of his commitment to a whole way of life' (Strathern A. 1982a:150). Thus Ndamba looks down in disapproval at members of his family who have turned to mission life and continues to perform his traditional duties - a pig kill to consecrate a new ceremonial ground, invocations to the ghosts (old and future) and the establishment of a Female Spirit cult site (Strathern A. 1982a:150-151). The leadership of big-men therefore embraces not only responsibilities in economic and social life but real concerns with the spiritual well-being of their groups and the sustentation of religious life as well. While men in the eastern Highlands, individually or collectively, appease their concerns about masculinity and fertility by turning to *bisnis*, reinvestment and new opportunities and are seemingly less concerned with the danger and control of women, big-men in the west continue to assume responsibility for their groups, sustaining fertility, balance and equivalence and the maintenance of gender hierarchy with attention to the ancestors and
exchange transactions in their widest sense. That this in part occurs during pig festivals and exchange, often with an overlay of Christian rituals and symbols, tends to mask the fact that exchange transactions are economic, social and religious concerns. Success in exchange in effect confirms ritual power (Brandewie 1991:79).

Cash and the Expansion of Exchange


The merits of coffee as a cash crop have been widely recognized although development across the Highlands has not been uniform (Brown P. 1978:244). The Wahgi Valley for example is one of the richest, most developed and densely populated areas of the Highlands (Reay 1982:623, O'Hanlon 1992:591). In the 1950's parts of the valley floor had been purchased and drained to establish expatriate coffee plantations. Perhaps because the Wahgi were simultaneously growing coffee on their own account, Chimbu and Enga plantation labour was recruited (O'Hanlon 1989:13-14). Although plantation development was forbidden in the densely populated Chimbu area, government officers issued coffee seedlings to selected leaders to plant out in communal coffee gardens with such success that by the early 1960's very few Chimbu gardens did not have some coffee growing (Brookfield 1973:137). In Hagen also, expatriates began to plant coffee and from the late 1950's Hageners' own trees, obtained from expatriate plantation owners, missionaries and government extension officers were beginning to mature (Strathern A. 1974:246), again with such success that Hagen men began to refuse contract labour in favour of coffee and cash (Strathern A. 1984:81-82). Further to the west development came a little later. In the

71 The administration thought that the *tee* militated against the development of economic individualism (Meggitt 1971b:204) while the missions thought that participation in *moka* diverted people from the Christian religion and business (Strathern A. 1975:228).
Nebilyer Valley it was not until the mid 1960's that agricultural officers supplied the local people with seedlings and advice although Dan Leahy had established his coffee plantation there in the late 1950's (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:26). Engans too were encouraged to grow coffee and other vegetable crops on small plots in their clan territory and from 1964 the marketing of these crops was facilitated by a Lutheran established diversified cooperative with a majority of Engan shareholders (Meggitt 1971b:201). As in the Chimbu area, plantation development in Enga was discouraged because its isolated narrow valleys were less suited for coffee growing and its relatively dense population already seemed to be in dispute over land (Meggitt 1977:149, Lacey 1982:363). While coffee has not been the only cash crop introduced to the Highlands it is the one with the most influence on economic and social life. Given that the western Highlands - Simbu, Western Highlands and Enga Provinces - are not geographically and demographically uniform or culturally identical, these areas are nevertheless linked by a common thread. They are unified by the unique ends to which the new wealth has been put - that is its 'investment' in exchange and its resulting expansion.

The new market economy has not broken down the existing social and political structures (Strathern A. 1974:247, Warry 1987:99). Despite many big and ordinary men and women showing enthusiasm for the cash economy, in the western Highlands comparatively little cash has been reinvested in commercial enterprises (Brown P. 1978:244). Some young men have developed a 'culture of high living' of drinking, gambling and prostitution (Meggitt 1971b:205, Strathern A. 1982c:115-116) while others, men, women and sometimes children, are avid card players (Strathern A. 1984:102, Merlan & Rumsey 1991:27). This diversion of cash into gambling has been reported right across the western Highlands, in Enga (Meggitt 1977:173), the Nebilyer Valley (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:27), Simbu (Standish 1991:126) as well as in the Hagen area (Strathern A. 1984:102-103) where parties are held in town and the consumption of food and beer is followed by ongoing games of cards played for money (with resulting fights over debts). Exhortations for supernatural support for winning cards, its risk-taking and profit-seeking aspects and the interest that older men take in the outcome of the games exhibits many of the principles of moka itself, and sometimes moka has been based on initial card games (Strathern A. 1984:102-103). A good deal of money too has flowed into purchases at trade stores - not for necessities because subsistence gardens continue to flourish - but rather for imported foods and luxuries. Many of these goods - canned fish, rice, frozen beef, beer and the like as well as commercial pigs - are not necessarily for private use. Rather they are goods for exchange prestation, or food to be consumed during related ceremonies. And cash itself is a major valuable in ceremonial and other prestige activities (Meggitt 1971b:203-205, Brown 1982:538, Strathern

72 In the Hagen area though, women are sometimes compelled to use coffee money to purchase food for their families because men have turned over their gardens to pigs in the anticipation of a big demand for them in approaching moka festivals (Strathern A. 1984:88).
The growth of ceremonial exchanges and prestations of all kinds - the linking of individuals, the elaborate chains of transactions like the Hagen moka and the Engan tee\(^73\), the pig festivals like the Chimbu bugla gende and the Wahgi konggar, bridewealth (and wedding feasts) and compensation - have been facilitated by cash and the luxury goods that it can purchase. Few of these heightened transactions however have enhanced conviviality or encouraged harmonious relations. Whether or not the tee is a derivative of warfare compensation payments - Feil (1980:21-22) argues that Meggitt (1974:174) is mistaken in claiming that this is so - compensation payments and other exchange transactions are often subsumed in the tee, somewhat contradicting the idea that tee is necessarily amicable, particularly so given that some segments are accompanied by loud or boastful talk (Feil 1978:264) and that more than a half of marriage separations reviewed by Feil (1978:271-272) are related to problems with tee obligations. Certainly it is likely that the Hagen moka and Nebilyer makayl did have their origins in warfare (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:84), as did certain Wahgi payments (O'Hanlon 1989:79-80), so it is not unexpected that these occasions of ceremonial exchange could be tense and possibly unstable. The injection of large amounts of cash into compensation, displacing appropriate categories of 'traditional' compensation payments, has further inflated compensation demands, particularly in relation to homicides of all kinds, providing a source in itself of new disputes and ongoing hostilities. The potential for tension and competiveness in bridewealth is less obvious. In Hagen though, bridewealth is a precursor of moka exchanges between affinal kin (Strathern M. 1972:10) and bridewealth payments, 'to pay for the head of a woman' are linguistically analogous to war compensation payments (Strathern M. 1972:98-99)\(^74\). Moreover, bridewealth transactions themselves can create uneasy relations - misunderstandings as to the status of gifts and dissatisfaction with their content. Now that the cash from coffee (and its inflationary effects\(^75\)), is included in payments the timing of the payments makes the transactions even more complex (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:74). The incorporation of cash in bridewealth payments, and the

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\(^73\) At first the tee grew and became so complex it began to fragment and another cycle was not expected to be held (Meggitt 1971b:204-205). Despite being fragmented and localized tee transactions in fact continued to expand (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:149).

\(^74\) Similarly, idioms of war are used in the verbal exchanges that take place in Kewa bridewealth exchanges and the Kewa pig kill was also closely tied to warfare in the past (Josephides 1985:57-59, 85).

\(^75\) In Hagen the inflation of bridewealth payments was so extensive that the Local Government Council imposed a limit on the size of payments. Payments though exceeded these limits apparently without complaint (Strathern A. 1984:94-95). Similar Council rules were also ignored in the Chauve District (Warry 1987:103-104). Recommendations Nos. 23 & 24 of the Paney Report respectively recommend that the Village Courts be empowered to settle bride price cases and Local Government Councils be encouraged to put an upper limit on brideprice with the groom's parents and village officers to report breaches (Paney Report 1973:17).
introduction of new gifts bought with cash, particularly beer, thus extends the possibility for conflict.

That a new product, beer, has entered exchange transactions of all kinds (Strathern A. 1982a: 149, Brown P. 1982: 536, Warry 1987: 106, O'Hanlon 1989: 14, Standish 1991: 172), is an added component to the volatility of exchange relationships. Warry (1987) highlights the complexity that beer has brought to Chauve bridewealth and wedding feasts, now held during the coffee flush when there is ready access to cash (1987: 131). Bridewealth is a corporate gift to be pooled with other clansmen. Even without the complication of beer, bridewealth distribution is a source of tension between fathers and the rival leaders who wish to supervise the distribution of the gifts (as a father should not distribute his own wealth), as well as the possibility of ill-will being created with perceived errors in distribution (Warry 1987: 132-133). Beer, having first entered wedding feasts as a corporate gift, used like pork and distributed with similar symbolic qualities, now is included as individual gifts and immediately consumed. Beer exchange itself is highly competitive, as are the drinking bouts that accompany its exchange - dusk to dawn drinking and widespread drunkenness of guests being an indicator of a successful event. And under the cover of drunkenness, big-men can be confronted, grievances aired and quarrels and physical assaults provoked (Warry 1987: 135-136).

Contrary to Feil's contention (1987: 64) that the breakdown of traditional ties of exchange is responsible for the resurgence of fighting, the reverse is true. Competition has become intense. As has already been argued, exchange transactions are both competitive and ambiguous and the more wealth that is exchanged, the greater the opportunity for the creation of conflict. Perhaps the absence of warfare may have permitted competitiveness to be expressed increasingly through exchange (Brown D. 1988: 102) and new unstable alliances may have been negotiated during the period of peace (Strathern A. 1984: 24). Nevertheless ceremonial exchange has always involved competitiveness and assertiveness (Strathern A. 1977: 145). Exchange transactions define the relationship between groups. While exchange may thus sustain good relations it is just as likely to keep alive memories of past hostilities and enmities (Strathern A. 1984: 23) as well as providing ongoing opportunities for misunderstanding and discord.

The status of exchange has been validated not just by western Highlanders, but by the actions of administrations, past and present, which have recognized that the restoration of good social relationships is an essential aspect of successful dispute settlement (Strathern A. 1974: 241). Given that the curbing of warfare and violent interaction has been an ongoing administrative goal, the indigenous custom of gift giving to make reparations and to restore good relations has appeared to be an institution to encourage. Thus compensation transactions have soared, more or less with official blessing,
because the exchange of wealth seems preferable to the exchange of blows. In the short term at least, exchange transactions, particularly compensation payments seem to restore the peace. This strategy is satisfactory where the scale of social and political relations is circumscribed. Yet where these relations are widened to include new contexts and extensive social interactions, the organisation of mediation becomes more complex, arbitration more difficult and the allocation of compensation inflationary and divisive - all of which requires greater administrative involvement and expanding courts. Compensation is at one end of a continuum of dispute settlement possibilities, with coercive power at the other (superior strength in warfare or the assumed force at the disposal of the administration). Yet compensation is also part of a wider principle of reciprocity so that the likelihood that a transaction is ever finalised is remote.

The introduction of cash and other new items of value into exchange transactions in the western Highlands, is a dynamic mixture of old and new - neither the dissolution of 'traditional' nor the rise of the 'modern' (cf. Gregory 1982:115). Yet given the enthusiasm that the western Highlanders exhibit for earning cash and engaging in new enterprises, the question arises as to why the 'traditional' is so enduring, particularly in view of their propensity to incorporate change and unexpected 'events' into their world view without an apparent sense of loss or discontinuity. In part the answer is in the question - the people's disposition is to accept the new and to recognise that the ability to know and achieve these things, already lies within themselves. In the Hagen area (Strathern M. 1990:33) and the Nebilyer Valley (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:231), people are interested in events that they are inclined to interpret as personally meaningful and a valuable avenue to self-knowledge. The new represents untapped possibilities within themselves and a way to learn more about their own potential. The Chimbu also see themselves as occupiers of a dynamic world (Brown P. 1972: Chapter 2) and the Enga accept the new and integrate it with the old (Lacey 1973:96). There is no compulsion to replace the old with the new. In the eastern Highlands the experience of the new has been somewhat different. The administration and missions stopped warfare and destroyed cult activity while simultaneously offering economic opportunities to fill the void in economic, social and religious life. In the western Highlands, the leadership of big-men and the exchange of wealth - the most prestigious activity in social and political life - has not been unsettled by the new, but rather enhanced.

The scope undoubtedly exists for big-men in particular to turn to purely individual money-making concerns and to seek to circumvent their arduous and never-ending exchange obligations. As alluded to above however, exchange responsibilities in the west are religious as well as secular transactions and cannot be waived lightly. Now that cash has revealed its full potential as a powerful valuable its use has to be constrained and part of this
constraint involves the control of women and pigs and their relationship to cash and exchange.

Cash and Gender Relations

Sexual polarity, and its expression in residential separation and beliefs in the polluting power of women, has been discussed above. Although fear and antipathy towards women had been particularly intense in the eastern Highlands groups, these have apparently declined or disappeared. Change in the western Highlands has not been so marked although new forms of government, missions, education and economic opportunities have done much to lessen segregation of the sexes and fears of sexual contact (Brown P. 1988:130-131). Nevertheless although men's houses are used for group gatherings that now include women, the houses of rural Chimbu women are still dispersed in their gardens (Brown 1986:166) and the belief persists that menstruating women can pollute (Brown P. 1978:62). Most Nebilyer women live separately with their young children - indeed if husbands and wives spend too much recreational time together it is considered strange (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:70-71). Although residential separation in the Wahgi area has largely disappeared, new-style houses have partitioned male and female sleeping areas which allow Wahgi men to assert that they do not associate too closely with their wives, an attitude consistent with their perception that close involvement with women is deleterious to their appearance and their health (O'Hanlon 1989:34,41). Chauve men too continue to be fearful of the debilitating effects of menstrual blood on themselves and other living things (Warry 1987:151-152). Hagen men, apprehensive of pollution, still reside separately (Strathern A. 1979b:xix). This is not unexpected as it has been argued that Hagen wives are seen as both intruders who compromise the integrity of groups and potential poisoners or polluters with the capacity to be intentionally and capriciously malicious (Strathern M. 1972:182,184). The attitude of Mae Engan men to women is less clear because Meggitt's references to men's fear of polluting women seem to have been located in an ethnographic present in the 1950's (Meggitt 1976:83 note 2), though Feil (1978:274) implies that separate sleeping quarters and menstrual taboos are still relevant for the Tomemba Enga. Certainly Carrad (1993:3) writing of her experiences in Enga (at Wabag) in the late 1970's and early 1980's reports that women delivered their babies completely alone because the power of the blood of parturition could weaken and kill both men and women. Again, the fact that in Enga old men still teach fighting skills to boys in their men's houses at night (Balakau 1978:192) implies that men and women do reside separately. It seems reasonable to assume therefore that in the western Highlands there continues to exist an ambivalence in male-female relationships, the possibility of pollution and a lingering uncertainty that as outsiders women's loyalty is not assured. That the Law Reform Commission recognises that domestic violence in the western Highlands is the highest in the country, and on the increase (Post-
indicates that male-female relationships are indeed strained.

Against this background of uncertainty as to the motivations and powers of women, women's access to a powerful new valuable is problematic. The development of coffee as a cash crop and the chance to market other garden crops, has given women in the western Highlands unexpected access to cash, relative freedom and potential status. Although women have limited influence over the distribution of the pigs that they have produced and no claim to the prestige accrued in the exchange transaction itself, they do have informal rights in garden crops which they have cared for, albeit from the land that they do not own (Strathern A. 1984:93). Small amounts of cash from seasonal vegetable crops that supplement a family's subsistence needs or buy a few luxuries are welcome, but a larger income from a long-term investment of land and labour in coffee production is another matter. While women's work has increased - subsistence gardening and pig raising continuing side by side with coffee production - so has their income and claim on resources, a dilemma that men in general and big-men in particular need to address.

Hagen men have contended with the access of women to cash in much the same way that big-men monopolized shell valuables in the past (Strathern A. 1979b, 1982a). With some rapidity, shells have been abandoned and cash defined as a valuable essential in exchange (in bridewealth and moka). Purely entrepreneurial men cannot achieve prominence with cash alone however, because cash remains second to pigs. Women too are kept firmly 'in their place' - raising pigs and having their cash appropriated into exchange which they do not give in their own names. Women are thus denied power and prestige, a condition further exacerbated by the use of cash to buy commercial pigs thereby devaluing those produced by women and highlighting those 'produced' by men, and by the introduction of beer into exchange given symbolically like legs of pork and consumed principally (although now not exclusively) by men. The appropriation though, is 'metaphorical and political' (Strathern A. 1982a:149) for with the exception of beer, the items are not consumed but exchanged. Big-men can raise themselves above potential accusations of self-interest by showing that they give and do not consume, thus maintaining their ideological supremacy over lesser men and maintaining successful exchange relationships as a bench-mark of true prestige - goals that enterprising or mission men do not achieve and to which Hagen women cannot aspire.

76 This situation is in common with the rest of the Highlands (Sexton 1982, Josephides 1985:116, Warry 1987:149).

77 One of the sons of Ndamba (a big-man from Hagen) points out that 'mission people are good at consuming food and receiving gifts but poor at organizing their own shows and paying back their debts' (Strathern A. 1982a:150).
Men have always had to grapple with the ambiguous nature of women's labour which produces the wealth upon which men depend for the creation of their reputations as transactors. It raises the possibility that women can become uncooperative and jeopardize the scheme of things (cf. Jorgensen 1991:258). Women's powers can be hazardous on a number of levels; as outsiders they may be disloyal, they can withdraw their labour and sabotage exchange, and it is possible that they may intentionally or otherwise, be dangerous or polluting. That these are interrelated concerns is argued below. Part of this argument entails the fact that men's control of women and the pigs they raise for exchange transactions is not simply a matter of ordinary or big-men dominating a resource for social and political purposes but a cosmic purpose as well - keeping order in the world by the management of fertility in general. For example, Ndamba, a Hagen big-man, quietly institutes subtle and not so subtle opposition against the values of the Lutheran mission and he sees the use of money in *moka* as part of an overall strategy in the maintenance of his traditional religious duties (Strathern A. 1982a:151).

An interesting comparison to the response of Hagen men to cash, women and exchange is provided by the example of the Chauve District of Simbu Province. (This is not to imply however that the exchange strategies of Hagen and Chauve are the same). Like the adjacent Eastern Highlands Province, the Chauve area is heavily missionized, the Lutheran mission having arrived in the area in about 1947. By the time the first permanent government patrol post was established in 1953 there were sixteen Lutheran teachers at work in Chauve as well as two additional mission stations, one Seventh Day Adventist and the other Catholic (Warry 1987:77-78). Mission *bosbois* patrolled the entire area, discouraging warfare and burning flutes, *gerua* boards and other cult objects, to such effect that by 1980 men up to the age of thirty five had neither seen *gerua* boards or knew of their significance (Warry 1987:77, 117). Such was the influence of the mission that as a young man, Mama, accepted early baptism to access the power of the church and the allegiance of other converts and thus became a big-man (see footnote 67). Chauve men were willing to abandon polygamous marriages to become Christian converts, a decision no doubt influenced by a lessening demand for intensive pig production associated with a decline in the pig festivals which the fundamentalist Christians had labelled as 'satan's work' (Warry 1987:121). The quest for pigs to exchange at other events - to prove that they are 'good men' - is a goal which could be shared equally by men, big and ordinary, with a relative lack of competitive tension or a desire for political dominance. The Chauve, recognizing that major imbalances in exchange produce hostility and fighting, are inclined to aim for *relative* balance in exchange and not engage in escalating encounters like the Hagen *moka* for example (Warry 1987:102, 108).

However Chauve exchange is a significant aspect of life - the giving of gifts being the way to obtain prestige and recognition (Warry 1987:99). All
Chauve exchange revolves around the transfer of women between groups, not just bridewealth and wedding payments but the exchange of 'first fruits', given as symbols of previous and potential marriages between families, and in a more elaborate form between clans (Warry 1987:124-127). Implicit in these exchanges is the realization that the exchange of women is a source of wealth and their labour essential for material success and the chance to earn prestige through exchange (Warry 1987:144). These 'first fruit' ceremonies were (are) religious occasions to honour ancestral spirits and promote fertility, although ostensibly they are now secular events that sometimes coincide with sporting fixtures (Warry 1987:127-128). That they remain religious events can be inferred from the development of women's savings groups. The reasons why women feel that they are compelled to take action and create these groups, combined with men's responses to their independent actions, would seem to indicate that more than secular concerns are involved in Chauve exchange.

Chauve women have control over the crops they plant, though like those in Hagen they lose control when these pass into exchange (Warry 1987:149). The produce they sell in the markets however yields them a cash income which they spend on tradestore goods, cigarettes and gambling and investments that they make in the women's savings club, Kafaina (Wok Meri in the eastern Highlands). Although they provide much of the labour in the subsistence and cash economies women are peripheral in exchange and receive a disproportionately small share of the cash income (Warry 1987:150-151). From an economic perspective they are disillusioned with the lack of local prosperity and development and critical of the way men squander their cash incomes. More significantly they feel that Christianity has influenced those parts of ritual life where previously they did have influence. In Kafaina they hope that by saving their money they can create economic prosperity and reestablish female avenues to power (Warry 1987:158-161). Thus the rules of Kafaina are 'analogous to many traditional beliefs...that...emphasise the inherent power and danger of women vis-a-vis a modern valuable, cash, which is itself contextually regarded as intrinsically powerful' (Warry 1987:163). With little success men try to persuade Kafaina women to withdraw their savings and make them available for male dominated prestations (Warry 1987:165,178).

Despite male supremacy in public affairs, Chauve men continue to fear and distrust women (Warry 1987:151-153). Although restrictions on menstruating women are now less strict and they may prepare food, travel and go through the gardens, intercourse during menstruation is unthinkable. Contamination with menstrual blood can have a debilitating effect on men, pigs and gardens, indeed all living things. Male initiation is no longer practised but

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78 Sweet potatoes, yams, taro sugar cane, nut or oil pandanus. Similar food festivals were reported in the central Chimbu and the Wahgi.
79 Membership of the savings club is not exclusive to women. Astute men can use this organization to gain political prestige (Warry 1987:180).
girls are still isolated at first menstruation at the conclusion of which they are dressed in their finest decorations and fed sugar cane (an ancestral spirit substance). Women are perceived to have power because they are closely in tune with the ancestral spirits. Men are vulnerable because when the missions disbanded the men's cults and revealed the secrets of the flutes to women the reverse did not occur. The secrets of women and their control over their reproductive capacities - abortion, infanticide and contraception - were not disclosed. Thus men have compelling reasons for controlling women and exchange is a medium for doing so.

In some cases women have begun to challenge men at exchange itself. Some 'strong' Kafaina women, having proved their ability to organize exchanges within the women's clubs, demand compensation payments for insults against the club and insist that they have the right to participate in other exchanges and take a higher public profile, even to the point of establishing Kafaina courts where women can act as arbitrators (Warry 1987:180). In this the Chauve women's groups have something in common with those of the Nebilyer Valley. Here events have demonstrated the extent to which women can become transactors in their own right (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:Chapter 7). Although ostensibly established to make 'bisnis' the ritual fervour of the Nebilyer women's clubs belie any notion that their activities are like Western 'business' (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:159). Having successfully armed themselves with valuables - food, soft-drinks and money - they interposed themselves between waring groups who were engaged in a long term dispute (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:1). Their gifts accepted and fighting averted, the women were thereby made eligible to appear officially at subsequent compensation occasions, with a forum to speak and the right to be reciprocated. In their act of mediation their bisnis money had therefore become a prestation and women had become transactors, recognized by men and women as a considerable accomplishment.

By taking this course of action, Nebilyer women have bridged the old and the new. Using cash from their new economic opportunities they lay claim to a tradition of mediation previously the province of big-men. Further they act in the name of the 'new order' - that is their concept of gavman lo - a blend of the old and the new. Here gavman lo is as remote from government law as bisnis is from business. When the women marched to the battleground they wore T shirt 'uniforms' and carried the Papua New Guinea flag as well as goods that were partly subsidized by government grants (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:158). Such symbols though carry no coercive force. The colonial government which did have coercive power (and the will to use it) has been replaced with a government that does not necessarily choose to activate its authority - evidenced by the fact that the group of the Western Highlands Premier was engaged in tribal warfare at his alleged incitement (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:191). However the government symbols and the women's later speeches identify their actions and aspirations as a blend of government law

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and traditional mediation (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:193-195). Within this
frame of reference *gavman lo* does not necessarily represent effective authority
but rather the maintenance or restoration of good social relations. And the way
of achieving these good relations is by mediation through exchange,
specifically the practice of giving compensation. From an indigenous
perspective compensation seems perfectly compatible with both customary and
government law - it provides reparation for death and injury and restores good
relations, at least temporarily.

A number of factors combine to make exchange an enduring and
expanding political and religious institution. Business opportunities and
increasing access to new cash wealth for men and women forces big-men to
device strategies to maintain political control and address religious issues.
That big-men can convince lesser men and potential big-men that exchange is
the only avenue to prestige and political power is an achievement, probably
assisted by deep religious doubt (not supplanted by Christianity) that the
control of masculinity and fertility is bound up in exchange and the control of
women. Women's access to cash has made the issue more complex but
unexpectedly has not diminished the growth of exchange. The reverse is true.
In economic terms the cash earned by women has in fact fostered exchange,
partly because men successfully appropriate their cash into exchange and
partly because some women place their money in women's savings clubs for
their own exchange purposes. The ritual elements of the clubs confirm that
women are addressing religious as well as economic issues. These
independent actions of women do not undermine exchange but rather they
affirm its ideological standing, particularly where women attempt to enter
those realms of exchange previously the province of men.

**Administrative Change**

It has been argued (Chapter 3) that the successful suppression of warfare
by the colonial government owed as much to the active complicity of
Highlanders as it did to administrative policy. Highlanders acknowledged the
material gains that they could make and appreciated the freedom of action that
peace could facilitate. Simultaneously they believed that the government had
real physical power and the propensity to use it. The administration's
increasing involvement in Highland affairs however permitted two disparate
trends to develop both of which undermined the process of pacification.
Firstly economic and dispute settling policies enhanced the development of
exchange in general and compensation payments in particular. Secondly, the
growing numbers of government positions and intervention in Highland life
gave people the opportunity to assess whether actual coercive power lay
behind the administration's demand for peace. Thus while exchange

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80 The good social relations established by the Nebilyer woman were indeed temporary as bouts of
warfare erupted during the years following (Merlan & Rumsey 1991:196).
transactions increased in scale and intensity along with the possibility of
dissension and dispute, the administration's apparent monopoly of authority
and power were simultaneously being eroded, firstly by a growth in
administrative complexity that removed the immediacy of government control
and secondly by the people's recognition that its power was less than absolute.

Under pressure from the United Nations and general world opinion, the
colonial administration in the 1960's began an accelerated programme of
political change, introducing policies which had a considerable impact on the
duties and expectations of the existing administrators (Gordon & Meggitt
1985:175). The rule of the early kiaps had been immediate and unambiguous.
In combination with their appointed assistants, luluais and tultuls, they
adopted 'traditional' aspects of dispute settlement to negotiate peaceful
outcomes, which given their proximity in time and space they had reasonable
expectations of achieving, particularly as people perceived that the kiaps had
the determination and the capacity to insist that they comply. Gradually the
situation changed. From the early 1960's the administrative power of the kiaps
began to be dismantled, the luluais and tultuls dismissed and 'Native Local
Government' introduced (Reay 1974:210). With this came elections, Local
Goverment Councils, divided responsibilities and, paradoxically, a diminution
of state authority (Strathern A. 1992:234).

That the Local Government Councils marked the beginning of the
dismantling of the role of the kiap was not immediately evident, because many
kiaps became Council advisors and because they continued for a time to hold
legitimate court powers (Strathern A. 1984:55-56). The kiaps' authority
however was quickly eroded - particularly by the partial separation of police
and administrative powers that resulted in shared responsibility for law
enforcement and the tensions between the two agencies (Standish 1973:13).
Kiaps went on fewer patrols, often without the presence of police to confirm
their influence and authority. Meanwhile in police zones, police alone
assumed responsibility for law and order, patrolling impersonally only in those
areas that their vehicles could negotiate (Strathern A. 1977:138). In some
cases police numbers actually declined (Meggitt 1977:170).

Under the changing system, the duties and responsibilities of kiaps became
specialized. There were growing numbers of other administrative officers to
work with but no adequate administrative hierarchy to regulate the system, so
efficiency declined (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:175). Kiaps became more like
clerks and people found it harder to determine what their functions were
(Moses 1978:222). Neither did the incorporation of indigenous kiaps clarify
the situation. The new kiaps were seen to be friendlier, more approachable
and not to be feared like the old, but this left them open to suspicion of self-
interest, favouritism and complicity in local matters (Moses 1978:220-222).
The administration did nothing to confirm their authority. Discriminated
against with lower salaries, and hampered with excessive administrative
controls, the indigenous *kiaps* in particular and *kiaps* in general were stripped of many powers, including eventually those of magisterial authority (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:176).

The new Local Government Councils were created with a view to political 'development', separating the magisterial powers of the *kiaps* (and later the trained indigenous magistrates) from the administrative duties now allocated to the elected Councils81 (Strathern A. 1973:74). Apart from the fact that the electoral boundaries often forced traditional enemies into new political entities, the structure of the new administration caused confusion in itself (Reay 1974:210). People were unsure as to where power and authority lay. The Councils were in effect powerless, their rules needing to be ratified from Port Moresby and their judicial powers non-existent (Strathern A. 1973:74). In theory, councillors were authorized to communicate the government's wishes to the people and to debate local issues, in particular the management of economic development and the provision of social services. In practice the scope of their duties was misused or misunderstood. Because many of the newly elected councillors had been former *luluais* and/or big-men, it was believed by the people and the councillors themselves, that they had the authority to settle disputes - a belief which the *kiaps* did not specifically contradict. The *kiaps'* courts were overworked and it suited them that the councillors could mediate on minor matters in unofficial *kots* (Reay 1974:210-211). Thus the councillors, with their helpers (*komitis*), became arbitrators although often with far less effectiveness than their predecessors, sometimes because those with Christian backgrounds lacked the skills to mediate and discover the underlying cause of problems, sometimes because those with an interest in business thought it too time consuming, and always because the ultimate sanction at their disposal was merely the threat of referral to the *kiap's* court (Strathern A. 1970c:561, Reay 1974:217-220, 226-227).

Nevertheless the *kots*, conducted in village settings maintained an immediacy of action and those councillors with skills in adjudication were respected and admired (Warry 1987:185) although without a range of sanctions they had to depend exclusively on compensation payments to provide reparation and the restoration of good social relations (Strathern M. 1972:226-227). Prior to the introduction of Local Government Councils, compensation payments had already begun to inflate and as people were denied the ultimate in self-help - that is of fighting and warfare - they increasingly turned to litigation to achieve their ends, with or without legitimate grievances. Frequently such claims were made less by those interested parties who wished to restore peace and more by the litigants themselves, who wanted to 'win' in the *kots* (Reay 1974:209, Gordon & Meggitt 1985:171). Increasingly too there were more problems to hear as the

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81 It was beyond the scope of either group to hear disputes involving land. Land disputes are discussed separately below.
proximity of former enemies provided the opportunity for hostilities to be provoked (Reay 1974:215) and indeed Councils themselves could be reduced to factional fighting, quarrels and sometimes physical violence itself (Warry 1987:82).

Under strong councillors some Councils did become effective political units (Strathern A. 1973:74), but generally they proved inadequate in a number of ways. Ostensibly one of the Councils' main functions had been the facilitation of economic development and social services - aid projects, roads, bridges, schools, economic opportunities and the like. These developments were slow in coming so that people believed that their taxes vanished with no returns (Standish 1973:9, Strathern A. 1984:56, Warry 1987:83). While effective councillors could direct more development to their area, people's expectations were unreasonably high, especially as they had become increasingly tardy in paying their taxes - payment of which council officers were powerless to enforce - and more and more of the Councils' functions were absorbed by the Provincial Governments that were introduced in the late 1970's (Strathern A. 1984:56-58). Often councillors were considered to be inept or dishonest or both, being accused of being lazy, stealing taxes, failing to communicate the content of council meetings and failing in general to listen to the people (Warry 1987:83). Yet they were operating within a poorly defined system. As unofficial members of the judicial system, a role they maintained until the establishment of the Village Courts (approved in principle in 1973), councillors operated without guidelines, regulations or supervision and imposed unpopular and poorly determined decisions without proper recourse to community opinion (Reay 1974:210-213, 237-238). They had ample opportunity to act with favouritism and to take personal political and economic advantage of the situation. Good social relations no longer seemed a priority. The system was further complicated by the fact that the kiaps and Councils did not necessarily act with one accord. In their self-defined positions as dispute settlers, councillors saw themselves as part of a hierarchy of power, a model not recognized by the kiaps who saw them and their komitis as nothing more than informal mediators in civil cases. Councillors felt that their potential powers were being undermined, a belief that was exacerbated when the kiaps were replaced by inaccessible specialist Local Court magistrates, interested only in the law, who neither patrolled nor took account of custom (Moses 1978:221, Strathern A. 1984:56-57).

Professional magistrates had been introduced so that due process could be observed by the courts (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:172). Magistrates were seen to be more powerful than kiaps, partly because they did not go on patrol like apparently lesser officials, and partly because people believed that kiaps had been found wanting because they had not helped people enough. Nevertheless magistrates did not satisfy the people's demand for justice. Unlike the kiap-magistrates they were removed from the community, seemingly like uninformed middlemen who failed to appreciate the complexity
of the cases and the underlying truth behind the issues - offenders appeared to go free, appeals made the system seemed arbitrary and the lodgement of appeal-fees the buying of favours (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:172-173). There was no question of restoring good social relations. That the judicial system was failing to bring justice to the people began to cause official concern (Chalmers 1978:57). With the accelerated demand for political change the credibility of the courts, especially in the rural areas, was seen to be acute because government officials anticipated that the approaching Self-Government would be seen to be a sham unless people felt that they had control over their own affairs (Chalmers 1978:69).

It was within this frame of reference that Village Courts were first introduced upon the recommendation of the Paney Report (1973)83, removing the responsibility of dispute settlement from the Councils in practice and in law and attempting to restore to the local people the possibility of 'customary power' - where people could choose their own magistrates, present cases without professional lawyers and be heard within the spirit of customary principles. While it had been argued that Village Courts could consider issues like polygamy and brideprice with greater skill than magistrates, others expressed a concern that such localized courts could be open to bribery and corruption (Chalmers 1978:69-70). Such concerns were mollified by the professional opinion of M. Strathem who argued that the concept of corruption was relevant only from a European common-law perspective and was not problematic in traditional situations (Chalmers 1978:70). Yet whether or not the possibility that such 'customary' situations still existed is debateable and problems still arose - the inappropriate nature of fines, the dependence on literate court clerks, excessive formality, the unsuitability of magistrates and the like (Strathem A. 1984:60-63, Gordon & Meggitt 1985:214, 230-231). Although the Village Courts supposedly were designed to restore power to the people, it was issues of 'law and order' that preoccupied the preliminary debates and provided the underlying rationale for the introduction of the Village Courts (Chalmers 1978:71).

Law and order (or the lack of it) had begun to reemerge as an administrative concern. The operation of the House of Assembly (which had its first election in 1964) raised a number of conceptual issues (Strathem A. 1973:74-75). It was clear that the Assembly not only managed revenue but also made laws, a perception that highlighted the declining authority of the kiaps who by implication merely followed laws themselves. It was also known that the House of Assembly debated laws but often could not agree on what these laws should be. At the local level the Councils had no formal court

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82 The first House of Assembly elections were held in 1964, Self-Government and Independence were proclaimed in 1973 and 1975 respectively and Provincial Governments established in 1977.  
83 Recommendation 5 of the Paney Report suggested, 'A system of Village Courts should be introduced as soon as possible which can dispense justice based on local customs and sanctions and which will have the full legal backing of the government' (1973:7).
powers at all. Where did local power lie? These issues were raised against a background of increasing unrest. There was an unequivocal law against fighting and killing but no positive laws, procedures or effective personnel to settle grievances between large-scale groups. In the Hagen area for example, these problems were causing major administrative concern. Escalating disputes resulted in loss of life and property and soaring claims for compensation that could not necessarily be enforced because those disputes that crossed Council boundaries had little hope of settlement (Strathern A. 1973:75-80). Such was the scale of these disputes that their progress was reported in the national press. Other Highland groups watched with interest. Those in the Wahgi area for example, listening to news of events on the Gazelle Peninsular, assumed that the government could not control the Tolai, and as they watched their Hagen neighbours engage in warfare, Wahgi (Minj people) 'weighed their chances of getting away with going to war themselves' (Reay 1974:228). Mae Engans also evaluated the administration's inability to act decisively and were encouraged to take matters in to their own hands. This was a decision they revoked only upon of the arrival of special riot police who impressed them with weapons, numbers and persistence - that is as far as the Engan's were concerned, real coercive power (Meggitt 1977:171,173). The Chimbu believed the courts, penal system and police to be ineffective and incapable of resolving intergroup conflicts. Fighting and transactions in exchange seemed a more satisfactory method of resolving differences (Brown P. 1982:536). As people perceived a weakening of administrative control, perhaps highlighted by improved communications and a sensationalist press (Standish 1973:4), they looked to solving disputes in their own way. That they did this with such rapidity seems to confirm that 'law and order' issues and the recourse to violence were problematic more for the administration than the people themselves.

The actual concepts of 'self-government' and 'independence', or at least how Highlanders interpreted these terms, did little to affirm the government's attempt to achieve stability. Many people assumed that their affairs would be under local control and that the *kiaps* would not be able to dominate them (Moses 1978:220). In some cases this was regarded as a positive advantage - they could do what they liked in a 'free time' without official constraints (Standish 1991:122) - in other cases it brought disquiet because the implications were unclear. While administrative complexity had removed the immediacy and focus of government control and created an 'administrative gap' (Strathern A. 1984:53), the suggestion has been made that people were simultaneously disillusioned, uncertain and insecure - partly from a perceived lack of progress and development, partly from the fear that Westerners would leave and take their expertise and wealth with them, and partly because people

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84 Incidents that began in a small way, for example - a vehicle accident on a collapsing bridge, a car accident involving a pedestrian, a murder in Rabaul - all escalated to involve increasing numbers of people, wider political units and a complex set of issues with claims, counter-claims and increasing demands for compensation (Strathern A. 1973).
were anxious that they did not have the knowledge, skills and resources to sustain the introduced way of life (Standish 1973:11,16-19 1982:395, Strathern A. 1977:139, 1984:22, Brown P. 1982:536,538). Perhaps Highlanders, having defined their customary ways as inadequate against the newly introduced laws and ways of doing things, had become dependent on the colonial administration and fearful that they did not have the material and human resources to prosper (Strathern A. 1977:139) but this belies the fact that Highlanders in general were innovative and willing to incorporate the new with the old. One of the reasons that people had participated in pacification was the idea that this was the way to gain the benefits of Western life - that is wealth and knowledge from economic development and education (Brown P. 1982:538). All of this had either been slow in coming or under threat of vanishing so that the rewards of not fighting were no longer self evident (cf. Ploeg 1979:162). As it became clear that the administration was not so powerful, the old ways did not look so powerless - Highlanders could look after their own affairs and do things in their own way (Strathern A. 1977:140).

**New Variations on Old Themes**

'Pacification' did little to disrupt the continuity of 'traditional' life in the western Highlands and many aspects of life have been consolidated and enhanced. As administrative control disintegrated, it further confirmed the expectation of Highlanders that they, and not the enveloping state, have an unspoken legitimacy of action. Nevertheless Highland life has been influenced by new pressures and the complications that have been introduced into social relationships.

Some of the contradictions that have developed can be illustrated by the confused attitude to Highland shows. The government encourages tourists to come and see Highland warriors in all their traditional war-making finery while simultaneously recognizing that gatherings of groups of former enemies sets the scene for trouble. An awareness that others are interested in things from the past encourages Highlanders to view the 'traditional' more favourably, particularly when falling coffee prices makes cash cropping less attractive, as in the Chimbu for example (Brookfield 1973:138). Significantly, Highland shows encourage old enemies to meet. In 1982 fifty thousand people gathered for a 'revival of cultural heritage' and despite suspected revengers being denied admittance, a road accident which injured and killed potential participants resulted in fighting and massive compensation payments (Post-Courier 26, 30 & 31 August and 1 & 7 September, 1982). In subsequent years there has always been much discussion as to whether shows should be proceed. In 1990 for example the Hagen show was abandoned, a cultural show substituted, and the show ground closed for two months in an effort to discourage fighting (Post-Courier 9, 20 & 22 August, 1990).
Many social encounters are made potentially lethal by the use of alcohol which has become an integral part of interpersonal and group exchanges, its excessive consumption a multifaceted issue with medical, economic and cultural implications (Marshall 1990:101-103). The complexity that beer brings to ceremonial exchanges has been mentioned above. A 1992 report by the National Research Institute found alcohol to be a significant element in thirty-five case studies of tribal fighting (Post-Courier 1 June, 1992). Highlanders had generally been introduced to alcohol after it had become legal in Papua New Guinea although the right to drink is still seen as part of the wider issue of racial equality and has come to be viewed as part of a sophisticated (male) Melanesian life-style (Marshall 1990:102-103). Attempts at controlling its consumption with periods of prohibition have thus been strongly resisted despite its proved relationship to road accidents, violent incidents and warfare. 'Getting smashed' is literally true (Parker 1990:258).

Roads and motor vehicles have been a mixed blessing in the Highlands. The construction of roads had been an important administrative goal, a way of accessing the country to promote peace and a method of diverting men from fighting. Yet while they have facilitated economic development, travel and wider social contacts, they have also provided the possibility for conflict - new allegiances create new enemies as well as allies (Strathern A. 1992:236). People fight over access to motor vehicles which are inexpertly driven and poorly maintained as are the roads on which they travel (Strathern A. 1979b:545). The addition of alcohol exacerbates an already volatile situation. Where accidents occur there is often swift retribution - attacks on drivers and demands for compensation. Despite the introduction of a system of Third Party Insurance in 1974, aimed at immediate compensation to discourage revenge killings, the processing of official claims has been slow and their effectiveness debateable (Parker 1990:257). Demands are made for larger and larger compensation payments. For example a massive compensation claim was made in the Dei Council area of the Western Highlands in 1992. Compensation demanded by the clan of a man killed by a car included K11,000 in cash (at the time approximately $11,000), 100 pigs, 1 horse, 1 buffalo, 6 cows and 11 cassowaries, exchanged at a ceremony attended by two thousand people (Post-Courier 23 March, 1992). In this case peace and harmony was reportedly restored but this need not necessarily be so.

Occasions for exchange of any kind, including compensation, have the ability to be unstable. Compensation payments in effect help to keep alive competitive reciprocal exchange. Two clans in the Hagen area for example, recently exchanged fifty large commercial pigs in the hope of settling disputes which have encompassed sixty years (Post-Courier 16 June, 1992). Given the widening of social contexts however, the possibility of exacting effective compensation payments is remote. Ongka, for example, warned his son against attending the Hagen show which he considered to be too far from home with too many enemies along the way. After his son in fact drowned on his
journey, Ongka would have liked to seek compensation but there was no one that he could successfully accuse (Strathern A. 1979a:114-115). In many cases claims are made on those who reject responsibility and the failure to pay generates still further hostility. The National Research Institute reports that the non-payment of compensation is a major contributing factor in igniting tribal warfare (Post-Courier 1 June, 1992). Yet even where compensation has ostensibly been successfully negotiated the outcome is uncertain. A peace ceremony on the Chimbu and Western Highlands border in 1991 involving six hundred armed warriors and over one thousand spectators, almost turned into all-out tribal war. But for the actions of police and persuasive government officials, this would have been the case, and even then it was noted that the burning of weapons as a show of good-will excluded the factory and homemade guns that had been brandished during the conflict (Post-Courier 3 June, 1991).

Guns have become a serious complication in Highland life. Although many Highlanders had been familiar with guns, as policemen or as hunters, the use of firearms in warfare had been relatively slow in coming. Yet once introduced, the change-over was rapid because all groups have an interest in maintaining a balance of strength (Strathern A. 1992:231-234). Guns are either purchased illegally from the coast or manufactured at home. In this endeavour young men, familiar with guns and the strategy for their use, gain recognition and the approval of the elders, yet only if they are used for tribal warfare (Strathern A. 1992:241). Where guns are used by raskols for their own purposes, community approval is ambivalent. Once considered as gangs of urban young men, high school graduates who engage in criminal activity through choice or lack of opportunity (Standish 1973:11, Strathern A. 1992:239), their activities are now harder to distinguish from the problems of tribal fighting. Because of their expertise with guns, raskol gangs are hired for raids, theft and assassinations and integrated into 'traditional' political systems, (Strathern A. 1992:239.). Reay (1987b:75) claims that in the Wahgi Valley every clan has its own raskol gang. Gang leaders and their supporters operate within a roughly given territory, using the principle of reciprocity to sustain their relationships much like the model of a big-man and his followers (Goddard 1992:25,27). Attempts by the police to break up raskol gangs thus have had limited success because they can expect a degree of support from families, friends and locals who have benefited from their shared gains (Reay 1982:627, Goddard 1992:29-30) but not suffered from their crimes - raskols in the western Highlands being careful to operate outside their own area while simultaneously avoiding border areas where vengeance could be provoked (Reay 1982:625).

Once Highlanders had access to more sophisticated weapons and the strategies to go with them (including trucks to transport warriors) police effectiveness declined (Mapusia 1986:63). Battle grounds are now selected with a view to making police access difficult and fighting is timed to reduce
the odds of police intervention. Alternatively set-piece battles are increasingly replaced with raiding, looting and ambushes (Mapusia 1986:63)\(^85\). When groups appear to be amenable to police demands it usually means that they have the advantage and are happy to stop while they have the upper hand (Strathem A. 1992:243). Frequently warriors now have superior guns to those of the police. Their powers of coercion eroded, police no longer have the authority to act effectively (Brown P. 1982:540), particularly as their cooperation with the village courts has been minimal and not united by formal or well-formulated guidelines (Keris 1986:73). Some magistrates are believed to be active warriors, take no initiative in ending wars, and occasionally incite them (Reay 1982:628). It is alleged too that magistrates help habitual offenders in order to secure the goodwill of their clans (Reay 1987b:97). Police are accused of brutality, including the harassment and beating of magistrates (Post-Courier 7 May, 1991) and to many people police seem much like another enemy group. Raskols may cultivate friendships with the police, plying them with gifts and setting up exchange relationships and the obligation of continuing indebtedness between between their clans and the police (Reay 1987b:96-97). Specialist police riot squads sometimes act like participants in the fights they are supposed to curtail, in effect promoting their continuance. Often unable to catch warriors, they take women hostages, commit rape and search premises, helping themselves to pigs, chickens and garden produce (Reay 1982:633, Mapusia 1986:63, Hughes J. 1989:94, Post-Courier 10 November, 1992). Should they be successful in capturing and gaoling offenders, the community considers the punishment unjust because they are deprived of the labour and support of those in prison (Reay 1982:629).

Unrest and dissension however goes far beyond the immediacy of alcohol, accidents, guns and an inadequate police force. Electioneering practices, elections themselves and post-election disturbances all highlight the blending of the modern with 'traditional'. Electioneering emphasises the extent that models of big-manship and exchange relationships have permeated from local to provincial and national politics. Approaching elections are anticipated to be times of severe unrest and potential trouble and parliamentarians themselves often have a vested interest in promoting local fights or postponing them until the electoral results are clear (Reay 1982:634). In general it is believed that it is essential for rival candidates to outbid each other with offers of bribes to individual electors (Strathem A. 1993:48). The close supporters of many politicians distribute guns to buy votes (Strathem A. 1993:47) and it is claimed that raskols are paid by politicians to cause trouble for their rivals (Harris 1988, cited in Kulick 1993:12). A normal part of campaigning is the distribution of beer on the eve of elections (Standish 1991:192,237). Recognizing the potential volatility of excessive alcohol, calls were made prior to the 1992 elections for a complete ban on alcohol all over the Highlands (Post-Courier 29 May, 1992), and a 'fighting' zone was declared in Chimbu for

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85 'Traditional' fighting had consisted of all these types of fighting.
two months and the police were issued with heavy weapons (Post-Courier 10 June, 1992). That such pessimism was justified can be illustrated by the election related violence that occurred in the Dei Council electorate in the Western Highlands. Disgruntled supporters of losing candidates destroyed many homes and three bridges so that people were unable to bring their cash crops to market in Mt Hagen (Post-Courier 11 February, 1993). Earlier, mob attacks and looting, all related to election rivalry, had occurred on the border of Dei Council and North Wahgi electorates (Post-Courier 8 July 1992). In Enga people were wounded and gardens and homes destroyed (Post-Courier 17 July, 1992). Violence is seen as an established response to political loss - the failure to reciprocate and consolidate exchange relationships (Reay 1982:634, Strathern A. 1984:103-104). As in the past, revenge is thus the underlying reason for fighting.

As well as alcohol and the non-payment of compensation, the National Research Institute suggested that land disputes are also a contributing factor in tribal fighting today (Post-Courier 1 June, 1992), an assessment disputed by the PhD thesis of Engan Dr A. Lakau (Australian, 21 December, 1994). It has been noted above that 'traditionally' the acquisition of land may have been the outcome of warfare but not a reason for instigating it. The exception to this was the Mae Enga who Meggitt (1977) reported were expressly interested in acquiring more land which they believed to be in short supply. Although this thesis has argued that the Mae Engan's concern for fertility and the maintenance of clan strength was the underlying reason for their interest in land, today many groups do fight and litigate to gain access to more land. If this is because land has merely become a commodity, fighting for land would seem to be a contemporary, not 'traditional' reason for hostilities. It is unlikely however that this is so. In the past boundaries were flexible and in a state of flux, except for the Kuma who laid sorcery traps to discourage enemies from settling on land which had been over-run (Reay 1971:184) and Hageners who had to deal with ancestral ghosts before they occupied land (Strathern A. 1975:67). As the first kiaps patrolled the Highlands, boundaries were frozen as they stood at that time so that some clans were in possession of land to which they had few rights, while others were dispossessed despite legitimate claims (Brookfield 1973:134, Reay 1974:227, Strathern 1977:141, Fingleton 1982:115, Gregory 1982:165). This demarkation caused great concern while the enforced peace left land disputes to rankle (Standish 1973:8). The problem intensified once the kiaps' immediate adjudication of disputes was displaced in 1962 by infrequent visits from Land Commissioners who hoped to promote individual title to land (Reay 1974:227). In 1973 the colonial government considered legislation to formalize a policy of freehold tenure to encourage 'development', an idea which was discarded (because of unfavourable New Zealand experiences), and finally put to rest in 1974-1975 by new laws which

86 Dr Lakau’s thesis argues that warfare is seldom the result of land disputes, but is related to revenge and alcohol.
preserved communal land and gave local leaders the power to settle land disputes (Strathern A. 1982a: 151-152).

This is not to imply that land disputes became less problematic. Group and individual identity focuses on land. Where land has been alienated, those who could lay claim to it are resentful that what they once perceived to be useless has become valuable (Standish 1973:8,10, Connolly & Anderson 1989, Joe Leahy's Neighbours). Cash cropping and expanded exchange (and thus the need for more pigs) has increased the desire for more land. Certainly those areas with serious tribal fighting - Chimbu, Hagen and Enga - also have relatively high population densities. A perceived shortage of land can promote more disputes and thus the taking of revenge (Strathern A. 1982a:142). Yet the interweaving of pressures on resources, increased competition in exchange and the continuation of the ideal of reciprocity in general, appears to make it doubtful that land can be isolated as a cause of fighting. The complexity of land issues can be seen in the film Black Harvest (Connolly & Anderson 1992). In the hope of gaining big profits from coffee, the Ganiga people entered into a cooperative venture with their neighbour, Joe Leahy. As coffee prices collapsed, it became essential for the Ganiga to make an extra commitment, to work harder and to accept lower wages. What they chose to do instead was to desert the plantation and to go to war in support of their allies. (There is no way of knowing though if they would have been more reticent if the coffee prices were high). Sometimes people do fight for land but not in the sense of gaining a commodity. Because exchange has proliferated, the ownership of clan land has persisted (Gregory 1982:116). Land is more than a material resource, valued not only for the material benefits it produces - gardens, pigs and cash crops (and sometimes timber and mining rights) - but also as a powerful metaphor for clan strength and prestige, fertility and growth and continuity with the ancestors.

An unexpected result of enforced peace has been the proliferation of sorcery. In some areas old fight doctors reassert their powers with an innovative sorcery practice - a surgical procedure whereby incisions are made in the chest to promote the formation of pus. This is considered to be proof that sorcery has occurred and thus big compensation payments can be demanded (Cooke et al 1992:828). The government and courts do not admit to the efficacy of sorcery, yet if an act is attributed to sorcery by those who have suffered from it or by those who have used it, the government treats the issue seriously. It is an offence to practise sorcery (or witchcraft, magic or enchantments), force or pay someone else to do it, use sorcery as a threat or possess implements or charms for this purpose (Post-Courier 27 March, 1992). Nevertheless, sorcery abounds and many suffer because they are accused and sometimes confess to practising it. Sorcery cases come before the village courts almost every day and where sorcery can be judged to have been provoked, people who retaliate against it may be charged with lesser offences - manslaughter rather than murder for example (Post-Courier 27 March, 1992).
When the colonial administrators suppressed warfare, their focus was on the physical, not the silent violence of sorcery. In the western Highlands misfortune could often be explained by the disapproval or malevolence of ancestral ghosts and less often by the actions of sorcerers and poisoners. Sorcery though was/is a weapon of revenge used to supplement or replace fighting where physical retaliation is not possible. With the suppression of physical conflict, fear of sorcery and poisoning has increased, heightened also by the suspicion that white men's poisons might be a new and dangerous weapon (Gordon & Meggitt 1985:155, Strathern A. 1992:248). The Mae Enga had usually relied on physical retaliation, using sorcery as a last resort and placing little credence in its explanatory value or its efficacy (Meggitt 1965:128). Once peace facilitated travel and unusual experiences, they were alerted to new dangers and adopted new sorcery methods from other Engans in the hope of maintaining the equilibrium (Meggitt 1981:39). Sorcery (witchcraft) has also increased in the Minj (Waghi) area with the added complication that women are the accused (despite the fact that traditionally a witch was usually a man) (Reay 1982:628). It is astute for women to accept the allegations because those who protest their innocence find themselves gaolied by the village courts for provoked offences or manufactured charges. The practice of sorcery therefore seems to interlock with other issues - the maintenance of retaliatory powers and the control of women and uncertainties in general. In a sense sorcery is obligatory, for without recourse to physical violence it is the only way to meet a moral obligation to balance old debts.

The many outside influences on life in the western Highlands - the introduction of alcohol, motor vehicles, new systems of roads and expanded social contacts (new allies and enemies), guns, elections and the like - all impact on and enhance existing institutions. Exchange has proliferated, its competitiveness given an edge by increased opportunities for misunderstanding and escalating demands for compensation, all of which seems to confirm that in essence contemporary warfare is difficult to distinguish from the 'traditional'.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

Government officials and others in Papua New Guinea are concerned at the lack of 'law and order' in their country and they speculate as to what can be done to restore the law and order that they believe to have 'broken-down'. It is not always clear whether they are referring to urban crime or to disorder in the country at large, but given that the operation of raskol gangs has permeated into rural areas and that the their leadership style mirrors that of big-men and their followers, the distinction may be irrelevant. The government perceives that the problem revolves around issues of development (or under-development) and the social disparities that have resulted - in particular unemployment. It is interesting, but probably not surprising, that they analyse the issue in such terms. Their objectives have been derived from the colonial administration and from it they have inherited the concepts that 'modernisation' and 'development' are ideals to strive for, and that the state can expect to have a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. When the government evaluates its current law and order problems in terms of 'modern' influences, it overlooks the past and assumes that past has been diminished by what it sees as the self-evident benefits of the new. It is not unexpected then that government agencies do not examine the past to understand the present.

The encapsulating state had seen itself as all-powerful and controlling. It credited pacification in the Highlands to its superior strength and what it assessed to be a preferred way of life. This completely overlooked the fact that Highlanders participated in pacification for their own purposes and made creative use of the new to enhance the old. It was not difficult for them to incorporate change or unexpected events into their own view of the world - they expected to appropriate the power of white men. Life was not static in the Highlands - groups supported competitive leaders who constantly had to prove their viability and generally groups were happy to accept new members and recreate genealogical ties to enhance current purposes. If they looked to the past at all, it was to make sure that deaths had been avenged and the ancestors, particularly the newly departed and those whose names were remembered, had been appeased.

That 'pacification' in the Highlands had apparently been achieved with ease disguised the fact that changes in Highland life were superficial. In insular Melanesia (and to a degree in the eastern Highlands), administrative, commercial and mission influence - along with indigenous cooperation - over time had instituted great change. In effect it was the destruction of the indigenous way of life which produced peace. In the Highlands, because of geographic and historic circumstances, the administration (which also took control of economic initiatives) and the missions did not act with unanimity. The colonial administration was conscious of world opinion and its own was performance was monitored by the United Nations Trusteeship Council. Serious disruption to social, cultural and religious life was not acceptable. In
turn the administration supervised the activities of the missions and sought to
curb over-zealous actions. With the administration proceeding with caution
and the missions curtailed, indigenous Highland life was not seriously
disrupted. Many of the changes that did take place in the Highlands transpired
because of the complicity of Highlanders themselves. They accepted the
benefits that flourished in the absence of fighting - day to day existence
without the fear of raids, new wealth from trade and introduced crops, freedom
to travel to expand their exchange partnerships and free time to devote to their
preferred activity - that of ceremonial exchange. In many of these activities
lay the seeds of disorder, because few of them represented a radical break with
the past. In the western Highlands in particular the administration facilitated
those activities to which Highlanders attributed meaning and prestige. In
effect they consolidated the circumstances that promoted warfare itself.

Whether Highlanders formed warfaring groups as a response to the
exigencies of war, or whether the existence of groups led by competitive big-
men made warfare inevitable, is a moot point. With no historic time depth it is
impossible to know which is correct, except in the light of 'contemporary'
warfare, the latter may be substantially true. In the eastern Highlands, the
administration and the missions seemingly removed the rationale for fighting -
they terminated warfare while simultaneously disbanding the related rituals
and offering an alternative world view. In view of this the former assessment
of the warfaring group may seem probable, except that the administration also
discouraged warrior big-men in favour of leaders who turned their attention to
new interests - coffee, cash, expanding businesses and reinvestment. With
plantations located between former enemies, and men operating as
entrepreneurs, more interested in individual and less in group concerns, it
became less likely that groups could be reunited for the purpose of fighting. In
the western Highlands where group interests prevailed, the warfaring group
was not disbanded, and the fact that fighting is at its worst in this area seems to
validate the second proposition - that the existence of competitive groups
contributed to warfare in the past as it does in the present. Big-men in the
western Highlands often had their roles as leaders consolidated and enhanced
by the administration which seemed more aware of their skills in social control
and less of their ability at warfare. Big-men in the western Highlands achieved
their positions of power within their groups by excelling at exchange, the
transactions involved being equally applicable to wealth or warfare. With
some enthusiasm, men, big and ordinary, turned the free time that peace
created towards the new wealth offered by crops and the cash that they
generated. Unlike Highlanders in the east though, instead of reinvesting the
profits in business enterprises, they 'invested' it in exchange. Far from
producing radical discontinuity, the colonial administration had thus confirmed
leadership of big-men and consolidated the groups which they held together.
The potential warfaring group was still intact as was the leadership of big-men.
Big-men continue to have a powerful influence on group life, not only older-style big-men, but younger men who recognize that the way to achieve power and prestige is to adopt the principles of big-manship by establishing sets of relationships and reciprocal obligations. Such ties are not limited to local relationships. Instead of the exemplar for leadership percolating from the state to local politics, the reverse is true - politicians, provincial and national, cannot hope to be successful without cultivating the image of a big-man. Part of this is the creation of the impression that a leader acts not for himself but in the interests of his group, and this always involves exchange and the maintenance of reciprocal relationships. Because of the cohesiveness of the groups lead by big-men, they can turn to warfare with ease. This becomes all the more likely when big-men, often politicians, use the idiom of exchange essentially to offer bribes, particularly when these 'gifts' are guns and beer.

That big-men integrate their followers into competitive groups is only part of the interlocking factors that makes (and made) warfare probable. Big-men have to be proficient at exchange of all kinds. As a direct consequence of the new market economy the profits of which flow back into exchange, all types of ceremonial exchange have become more complex. Regardless of the types of exchange, be they in elaborate chains of transactions, pig festivals, bridewealth, wedding feasts or compensation, the outcomes are not necessarily harmonious. Perhaps this is to be expected of those transactions that have their origins in war compensation payments, or compensation payments in general, yet many occasions for exchange, like bridewealth and wedding feasts, are also competitive and tense. Exchange ceremonies of any kind have the potential for misunderstandings and conflict, particularly now that beer has become an item of exchange, and one that is consumed at ceremonial events with disastrous results.

The exchange of wealth at ceremonial events is however only one aspect of exchange. The principle of reciprocity that underpins all exchange involves reciprocity of both wealth and warfare. Exchange transactions thus include revenge - that is, the responsibility for maintaining equivalence and the balancing of deaths. There is a moral obligation to create a balance, not only for the individual death but for the clan which has been depleted by the loss. A concern for the continuity of clan life thus makes revenge indispensible, and in effect a religious imperative. That balance must be obtained is a reflection of the fact that Christianity has had little effect on life in the western Highlands. Those practices that the missions discouraged were often superficial like dancing and decorations, for example. The one practice - that of exchange - which did have great significance in the ordering of social, cultural and religious life was largely overlooked. Although the missions, and to a certain degree the administration, did disapprove of the large exchange ceremonies like the moka and tee, they did so for the wrong reasons, considering them economically unsound or a diversion from mission activity. Smaller exchange ceremonies were often encouraged and sometimes
incorporated into Christian rituals. What conversion actually meant to the Highlanders is unclear. Certainly it did not involve the rethinking of their conceptual world and many missions in fact encouraged the underpinnings of their logic. By being indifferent to, or sometimes encouraging exchange, the missions have not recognized that the tenet of revenge is part of the organisational principle of exchange.

The essence of religious concerns embraces leaders and their responsibility to their groups for sustaining fertility, balance and equivalence. Part of the obligations expected of the living involves their reciprocal relationships with the ancestors. Those whose names are remembered remain part of exchange transactions in the present. The necessity for revenge thus provokes warfare, and if physical revenge is impossible to achieve, then vengeance is accomplished through sorcery or placated by the exchange of wealth in compensation payments. Yet given that individuals are different, and assessed as being worth more or less in different circumstances and by different people, the likelihood that balance can be achieved is remote. In this lies the potential for further deaths or escalating demands of compensation, the assessment of which is divisive in itself.

That the seeking of balance and equivalence is a religious issue, focussing on a concern with fertility and the continuity of life, can be inferred by two seemingly disparate aspects of Highland life - the importance of pigs in ceremonial exchange and the control of women. During the period of 'pacification' in the Highlands the missions had destroyed the flutes that symbolically linked men to the ancestors, but not pigs which also linked the living and the dead, not as sacrifices but as mediators between themselves and the ancestors. Pigs, essential in many prestations, identified with security and satisfaction, are important in every aspect of life - economic, social and religious. The production of pigs is precarious, their care continuous and arduous and their numbers limited by the capacity of wives to nurture them, yet men retain their interest in them. Although cash (whose availability is theoretically unlimited) has entered exchange, it has not replaced pigs as the most significant item of exchange. In mundane terms this helps big-men maintain their advantage over purely entrepreneurial men, but it also stresses that pigs are essential for a relationship with the ancestors, and indicates the complexity of the relationship between men and women. In the most part, women raise the pigs that men then exchange to discharge social and religious obligations, yet relations between men and women are tense and polarized.

The prevalence and increasing incidence of domestic violence in the western Highlands and the inequitable treatment of women by the Village Courts, accentuates the fact that the problems of the past are equally important in the present day. In the past men and women had been considered to be radically different, and women physically and metaphorically dangerous and inimical to men. Men's antipathy to women in the western Highlands had been
more subtle than that in the east. Nevertheless, men in the west also stressed the antithetical nature of men to women and an ambivalent attitude to female strengths and weaknesses. In many instances this is still the case. A certain amount of residential separation of the sexes has persisted as has the opinion that close contact with women is deleterious to men's health. Men's relationship with women is indeed problematic. Men need women as wives and pig raisers and without their contribution (feared to be unreliable) they cannot fulfill their own exchange responsibilities. On one hand men need to 'keep women in their place' while on the other they cannot do without them. Men's dilemma is particularly heightened by women's access to coffee and cash, a problem that they have contained by persuading women to divert much of their money into traditional exchange that men control. That they do this with some success is partly due to men's control of women, but also because women subscribe to the same values, as their 'investment' in women's exchange clubs confirms. Women too are concerned with ritual and reciprocity and a guarantee that continuity and fertility is assured.

The question presents itself as to why pacification, however short, was achieved. Although the perception was flawed, Highlanders believed that white men (and their guns) represented real coercive power. Here was a potential enemy with which it was impossible to form equal or balanced relationships. In fact white men could not become 'the enemy' because they were outside the moral system - they were aloof and impervious to reciprocal transactions. It seemed astute for the Highlanders to respect their power, particularly because the white men also offered great material gains which must have helped Highlanders to mollify their concerns about fertility and continuity of life. And as for revenge - the imperative to exact retribution could be diverted into sorcery or demands for compensation. Such a relationship seemed to work reasonably well, particularly while the administration was perceived to be strong with real power at its disposal. Shortly before Self Government and Independence however, the structure of the administration began to change.

Although more complex, the administration is now less efficient, and the western Highlanders can see that the administration is not physically all-powerful. Government officers act like big-men and introduce into government many of the competitive factors of exchange which includes new variations of electoral instability. Simultaneously magistrates and police form reciprocal relationships with local groups so that the administration and law enforcement officers share the ethos of equivalence and are not beyond the scope of exchange obligations and thus revenge. Perhaps people's assessment of the seriousness of fighting today is distorted by the period of relative physical peace (as distinct from the violence of sorcery) that that gives the impression that law and order has 'broken-down'. Perhaps too their expectations of wealth, heightened and diminished by fluctuations in the profit from coffee and other cash crops, gives rise to feelings of uncertainty.
Certainly the weapons of warfare are more lethal and the scale of relationships extended and aggravated by car accidents, alcohol and the like. Yet the underlying themes of life in the western Highlands remain the same and people fight for much the same reasons as they have done in the past.

Disagreements over many things - pigs, women, insults, alcohol, accidents, suspicion of sorcery and the like - precipitate fighting but behind all of these superficial reasons for retaliation lies the tenet of revenge. The administration and missions clearly did not institute holistic change in the western Highlands. People still fight and the ideology of reciprocity that underpins all forms of exchange remains a powerful organisational principle in social, cultural and religious life.
GLOSSARY

Bisnis  Business
Bosbois  People chosen initially at 'first contact' to be intermediaries between their groups and the administration, to gather people for census taking, work projects and the like.
Bugla gende  A Chimbu pig-festival.
Gavman lo  Government law.
Gerua  Non-ancestral spirits, although closely connected with the ancestral spirits. Correct rituals, the killing of pigs and the wearing of gerua boards made the supply of pigs bountiful.
Gerua boards  wooden, highly-painted flat boards with geometric designs, worn as headdresses during the above ceremonies.
Idza nama  Festivals conducted by the Guhuku-Gama (and similar festivals conducted by other eastern Highland groups). The festivals introduced young warriors to the community (following initiations) as well as the exchange of pigs, killed to discharge obligations to the allies for their dead. (See in relation to the nama cult below).
Kafaina  Women's savings clubs in the Chauve area of Simbu Provence.
Kiap  Government patrol officers or administrative officers.
Komitis  People who helped the councillors in the unofficial courts.
Konggar  A Wahgi pig-festival
Kots  Unofficial courts held by councillors.
Luluais  Men of local influence appointed by the administration to help them with their tasks - to secure local cooperation by preventing fighting, mobilizing work gangs and the like.
Makayl  A type of ceremonial exchange in the Nebilyer Valley.
Moka  An elaborate system of exchange in the Hagen area.
Nama cult  A complex of religious and social activities and beliefs which surrounded the nama flutes.
Nama flutes  Made from a single piece of bamboo, they were played at major festivals and ceremonies, although never in the view of women who believed their sound to be the call of a bird. Their playing linked men to their ancestral past and their tunes were a symbol of unity. They were common to all the eastern Highland groups and also the Chimbu and Wahgi areas.
Nama ge'isa  A fertility rite through which men communicated with the ancestors, using the nama flutes.
raskol  Criminals (rascals), often considered to be young unemployed high school graduates, who engage in urban and now rural crime, including tribal fighting.
Te or tee  An elaborate exchange cycle of prestations of pigs, pork and other valuables, exchanged over a period of about four years by Engan clans.
Tok Pisin...  Melanesian Pidgin.
Tol y' b'  Wahgi (Kuma) people 'thinking of the dead and how to avenge them'.
**Tultul** Minor officials who assisted the *luluais*, acting as messengers and interpreters for example.

**Wok Meri** A women's savings club in the Eastern Highlands.
APPENDIX 1

Government Responses to Law and Order Issues.

1972 Committee to investigated tribal fighting (Paney Report 1973)
1973 Deployment of police mobile squads in Highlands
1977 Inter-Group Fighting Act passed by parliament
   Task Force on Royal P.N.G. Constabulary
1979 State of Emergency in Highland Provinces (in Enga until 1980).
1980 National Planning Committee policy hearing on village courts
1981 Port Morseby Committee for the promotion of law and order
   Committee of Review of Law and Order appointed by National Planning Committee
1982 Review of Royal P.N.G. Constabulary operations, management and administration
   Special police operation in Highlands for 1982 national elections
1983 Committee to review policy and administration on crime, law and order,
   (The Morgan Committee).
   General special police operation in Highlands
1984 The INA/IASER study of law and order (Clifford et al 1984)
   Appointment of sectoral committee on law and order to draw up Medium Term Development Strategy
   National Executive Council Decision 176/84 'Measures to combat the breakdown of law and order', the 49 measures
   Implementation task force for 49 measures appointed
1985 Law and order task force established
   State of emergency in National Capital District
   Mr Wingti announced employment strategy as solution to law and order problems
1988 Soldiers used to restore order at Ok Tedi Mine.
   Ministerial Committee on Law and Order
   Police/army operation LOMET (law and order, murder, escapes and tribal fights)
1989 Community law awareness campaign
   Soldiers used in Port Morseby 'peace riot'
   Law and order secretariat re-established
   State of emergency in Bougainville
1991 Crime Summit
   Curfews imposed
1993 National Law, Order and Justice Council
   Introduction of the Internal Security Act
   Law and order amendments proposed to the Constitution

APPENDIX 2

Suggested Government Measures to Discourage Crime

1991 Crime Summit
Mr Namaliu requested the re-introduction of the death penalty for murder, rape and armed robbery, the imposition of curfews in major cities and the Highlands, tattooing of all convicted prisoners, introduction of a national guard for one year youth-service, maximum security gaols, identification cards, repatriation for unemployed to their villages and the recruitment of overseas police officers (Post-Courier 15 March, 1991).

1993 proposals to amend the Constitution
To reverse the legal convention of 'innocent until proven guilty', to establish compulsory identity cards and to restrict the granting of bail in lower courts (Sydney Morning Herald, 23 September, 1993).
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